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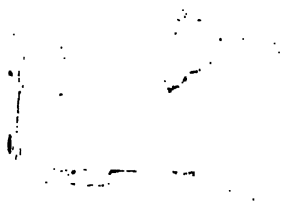


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KENNETH MATHESON TAYLOR
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FOR ENGLISH LITERATURE



THE KING'S CLASSICS UNDER
THE GENERAL EDITORSHIP OF
PROFESSOR GOLLANCZ



THE MAN OF LAW'S TALE
THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE
THE SQUIRE'S TALE BY
GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Accipiendo disciplinā: nequando irascat dō
et gratis de ma niso. Cum essent i brem ma
cus: leati omnes qui confidunt in eo. psalm.



"Ha! ha! the fox!" Nuns' Priests Tale, l. 561.
Part of an illumination in a late XIV century Antiphonal.
(Brit. Mus. M.S. Lansdowne. 463. leaf 105.)



THE MAN OF LAW'S
TALE THE NUN'S
PRIEST'S TALE THE
SQUIRE'S TALE BY
GEOFFREY CHAUCER
DONE INTO MODERN
ENGLISH BY THE REV.
PROF. W. W. SKEAT

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"THEN PARDON, O MOST SACRED HAPPY SPIRIT,
THAT I THY LABOURS LOST MAY THUS REVIVE! . . .
I FOLLOW HERE THE FOOTING OF THY FEET,
THAT WITH THY MEANING SO I MAY THE RATHER MEET."

Spenser.

"THE COCK AND FOX, THE FOOL AND KNAVE IMPLY;
THE TRUTH IS MORAL, THOUGH THE TALK A LIE "

Dryden.

"THE STORY OF CAMBÚSCAN OLD,
OF CAMBALL AND OF ALGARSIFE,
AND WHO HAD CANACÉ TO WIFE,
THAT OWN'D THE VIRTUOUS RING AND GLASS;
AND OF THE WONDROUS HORSE OF BRASS
ON WHICH THE TARTAR KING DID RIDE."

Milton.

PREFACE

I. THE MAN OF LAW'S TALE.

Nicholas Trivet. — The immediate source of *The Man of Law's Tale* is the Anglo-Norman Chronicle of Nicholas Trivet, written about A.D. 1334,¹ which was edited for the Chaucer Society by Mr. E. Brock in 1872, with an English translation.

Trivet was an English Dominican friar who is known to have written at least eighteen works, mostly in Latin, in the reigns of Edward II. and Edward III. His Chronicle, written in Anglo-Norman, is extant in MS. Arundel 56 in the British Museum; in which copy the story of Constance begins on the back of leaf 45. Mr. Brock has made a careful comparison of this with Chaucer's text, with the following result. "Chaucer tells the same story as Trivet, but tells it in his own language, and in much shorter compass. He omits little or nothing of importance, and alters only the details. Chaucer's additions are many; of the 1029

lines of which the tale consists, about 350 are Chaucer's additions. The additional passages are these: ll. 190-203; 270-287; 295-315; 330-343; 351-371; 400-410; 421-427; 449-462; 470-504; 631-658; 701-714; 771-784; 811-819; 825-868; 925-945; 1037-1043; 1052-1078; and 1132-1141."

Pope Innocent III.—A Latin treatise is extant, written by Cardinal Conti (1161-1216), afterwards pope Innocent III., entitled *De Contemptu Mundi sive de Miseria Conditionis Humanæ*. Chaucer himself tells us, in line 414 of one of the prologues to the *Legend of Good Women*, that he made a translation of this treatise, to which he gave the title *Of the Wretched Engendring of Mankind*. Considered as a whole, this treatise is lost; but it is very remarkable that several passages of it are still extant, owing to the fact that Chaucer himself inserted them in *The Canterbury Tales*; partly in *The Man of Law's Prologue*, partly in *The Man of Law's Tale*, and partly in *The Pardoner's Tale*. From this source are derived four complete stanzas in *The Man of Law's Tale*, viz. ll. 421-427; 771-777; 925-931; and 1135-1141. All of these are introduced by way of comment on the story, though of course they do not really belong to it.

Other Old Versions of the Story.—As we know that Chaucer was indebted for the story to none but Trivet, it is unnecessary to say much as to other versions of a similar story or stories. The story as in Trivet really contains three stories or incidents at the least, which have been run into one in course of time. These are: (*a*) the story of Constance's marriage to the Sultan, ll. 134-504; (*b*) the treachery of the knight who slew Hermengild, ll. 533-689; (*c*) Constance's marriage to Alla and the treachery of Donegild, ll. 694-1162. And probably the incident of the assault made upon Constance by the steward (911-945) was once likewise separate from the main story. Hence it is that various parts of the story have their parallels in other versions that do not, however, contain the whole of it. It is sufficient to enumerate some of these.

There is a very similar story in the *Lay of Emaré*, as printed by Ritson in the second volume of his *Metrical Romances*. In the *Romance of Sir Eglamour*, one of the so-called Thornton Romances, printed for the Camden Society, the heroine is sent to sea in a ship by herself. The treachery of king Alla's mother enters into the Anglo-Saxon romance of *King Offa*, preserved in a Latin form by Matthew Paris; and again

appears in the French romance of *Le Chevalier au Cigne*, and the Italian collection of tales known as *Il Pecorone di Ser Giovanni Fiorentino*. The treason of the knight who murders Hermengild is an incident in the French *Roman de la Violette*, and in the English romance of *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, as printed by Ritson. The same tale appears in the English version of the *Gesta Romanorum*, where it is joined with that of Constance's adventure with the steward; and this account was versified by Hoccleve, who calls it *Fabula de quadam Imperatrice Romana*; see his *Works*, ed. Furnivall, p. 140. There are other versions which need not here be mentioned.

Gower's "Confessio Amantis."—The story of Constance is also told by Gower, in Book II. of his English poem entitled *Confessio Amantis*. Professor Macaulay has lately shown in the preface to his excellent edition of this work, that Gower did not complete his first issue of this poem till the year 1390, though his second issue (or edition) of it was finished in 1393. This is important, because it was formerly supposed that Gower's first issue of this poem was of earlier date, thus raising a doubt (now set at rest) as to whether Chaucer's poem or Gower's was the older. It is now clear that Chaucer's *Man of Law's Tale* cer-

tainly preceded Gower's version of the same story. A close comparison of Chaucer's tale with Gower's shows that both were indebted to Nicholas Trivet, but Gower follows the Anglo-Norman original much more closely, adding but little or nothing of his own. Hence it is that each of the poets sometimes retains an expression which he found in the original where the other omits it. Thus where Trivet says: "et ferri tiel coup en le haterel le feloun," *i. e.* and struck such a blow on the nape of the neck of the felon, Chaucer preserves the reference to the word *haterel* in l. 669, but Gower ignores it altogether. On the other hand, where Trivet says that Donegild was visited by the messenger when she was residing at Knaresborough, Chaucer never mentions this place by name (see l. 730), whilst Gower expressly does so. It also appears that in a few places, not very material, Gower has copied Chaucer's very words without any reference to the original. A curious instance of this occurs at l. 799: "But in the sam-ë ship as he hir fond [found her]." Here Gower follows Chaucer's lead, at l. 1031 of his second book, and says:

"That ye the sam-ë schip vitaile
In which that sche tok árivaile"—

i. e. in which she arrived. But the original simply says

ne nef (a ship), implying that it was *not* the same ship, but a new one.

II. THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE.

This capital Tale is the most characteristic of the series, as it shows Chaucer's playful humour at its best. It abounds in light touches of gentle merriment, and shows the skill of a master in the art of telling a very slight but most amusing story.

Marie de France.—The French poetess Marie, surnamed de France because she was born in France, resided during the greater part of her time in England, in the early part of the thirteenth century. She wrote several Lays (French, *Lais*), a poem on the Purgatory of St. Patrick, and a collection of fables after the manner of *Æsop*, all in Old French. One of her fables concerned a Cock and a Fox; and as it consists of but 38 lines, I venture to reproduce here a translation of it by myself, which first appeared in *The Academy* for July 23, 1887:—

THE COCK AND THE FOX.

A Cock our story tells of, who
High on a dunghill stood and crew.
A Fox, attracted, straight drew nigh,
And spake soft words of flattery.

“Dear Sir,” said he, “your look’s divine!
I never saw a bird so fine!
I never heard a voice so clear
Except your father’s—ah! poor dear!
His voice rang clearly, loudly—but
Most clearly, when his eyes were shut!”

“The same with me!” the Cock replies,
And flaps his wings, and shuts his eyes.
Each note rings clearer than the last;
The Fox starts up, and has him fast;
Towards the wood he hies apace.

But as he crossed an open space,
The shepherds spy him; off they fly;
The dogs give chase with hue and cry.
The Fox still holds the Cock, though fear
Suggests his case is growing queer.—
“Tush!” says the Cock, “cry out, to grieve ’em,
‘The Cock is mine! I’ll never leave him.’”
The Fox attempts, in scorn, to shout,
And opes his mouth; the Cock slips out,
And in a trice has gained a tree.

Too late the Fox begins to see
How well the Cock his game has play’d;
For once his tricks have been repaid.
In angry language, uncontrolled,
He ’gins to curse the mouth that’s bold
To speak, when it should silent be.

“Well!” says the Cock, “the same with me;
I curse the eyes that go to sleep
Just when they ought sharp watch to keep
Lest evil to their lord befall.”

Thus fools contrarily do all;
They chatter when they should be dumb,
And, when they *ought* to speak, are mum.

Le Roman de Renart.—The same story

occurs, in an amplified form, in the Old French poem entitled *Roman de Renart* (Romance of Reynard the Fox), edited by Méon in 1826. The particular passage of this long Romance which concerns us comprises 454 lines (numbered 1267 to 1720), and contains the account of the cock's dream about a strange beast, and other particulars of which Chaucer makes some use; so that this is probably the version which our poet had before him.

Similar stories occur, especially in Latin, in several collections of fables; but they need not be here considered.

There is an Old English poem entitled *The Vox [Fox] and the Wolf*, in which there occurs a dialogue between a cock and a hungry fox. But in this case the cock declines to listen to flattery, and the fox retires foiled.

Dryden's imitation.—The tale of *The Cock and the Fox*, as told by Dryden, is imitated from Chaucer, with considerable amplifications. The 626 lines of his original have become 821 lines in the imitation, by the addition of 195 lines, which are partly due to expansion of the original wording, and partly to additions of which the original gives no hint. And just as the *Nun's Priest's Tale* is eminently characteristic

of Chaucer, so *The Cock and the Fox* is equally characteristic of Dryden. It is an excellent poem, but is best appreciated by reading it for its own sake, without reference to its source.

III. THE SQUIRE'S TALE.

The Squire's Tale is one of peculiar interest, as it is the only one which shows clear traces of having been derived from Eastern sources, and of being obviously influenced by Arabian imagination.

The Travels of Marco Polo.—Marco Polo (1254–1324) was a celebrated Venetian traveller, who accompanied his father and his uncle on a visit to China; and they were the first Europeans to explore that country. Marco, after his return, dictated his travels to a fellow-countryman in the Old French language, of which there is a most valuable and admirable modern English translation by Col. Yule, accompanied by most interesting and important comments. Col. Yule was the first to point out that the title of Chingis Khan or Gengis Khan (which simply means “great lord”) appears as *Camiuscan*, from which the transition to *Cambuscan*¹

¹ Accented on the first and last syllables. Milton un- luckily adopted an accentuation on the *second* syllable, which is wholly without authority and has misled many.

(the form given in the old black-letter editions) presents no difficulty. It may be noted that the best MSS. of Chaucer give the form *Cambynskan*, which obviously arose from reading the above as *Caminscan*, owing to the continual confusion between *n* and *u* in old MSS.

It is usual to restrict the use of this title to Temugin, who was the first to bear it, but it was borne by his descendants also; and the particular khan referred to by Chaucer was his grandson Kublai; the very "Kubla Khan" whom Coleridge celebrated in his poem with that title. This Kublai Khan is described by Marco Polo from personal observation (Yule's edition, i. 318). He died in 1294. A comparison of *The Squire's Tale* with Marco Polo's *Travels* soon shows us that Chaucer was indebted to that traveller for several particulars, as I have shown in detail in my edition of *Chaucer's Works*, iii. 471-5.

Arabian Magic.—It is easy to see, as has been fully shown by Warton, in his *History of English Poetry*, that the magic horse, the magic mirror, and the magic ring are all of Arabian origin. More recently Mr. Clouston has dealt fully with the subjects of Magic Horses and Chariots, Magic Mirrors and Images, Magic Rings and Gems, the Language of Animals, and

Magic Swords and Spears. His essay was printed for the Chaucer Society in 1889, and should be consulted by any who desire further information on this subject. It is, perhaps, worth while to say that a very accessible account of the Magic Horse occurs in the well-known and characteristic book known as *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*.

With respect to the story of the Falcon, Mr. Clouston observes: "The scene between Canacee and the Falcon is essentially Asiatic, and Warton's complaint that the bird is represented as talking of Troilus, Paris, and Jason, is utterly absurd. It is, in fact, an Indian fable, with a bird talking out of the Grecian classics instead of out of the Vedas and the Shastras. If the poet had any purpose in writing the story of the deserted Falcon, it could only have been that of any Asiatic fabler, namely, to convey certain moral lessons through the feigned speech of a bird. . . . There exists a somewhat analogous ancient Indian tale of two birds—a male parrot and a hen *maina*, a species of hill-starling—in which, however, it is the male bird who is distressed at the female's treachery, and is about to cast himself into the midst of a forest-fire, when he is rescued by a benevolent traveller, to whom he relates the story of his woes."

The Unfinished Story.—Every reader must be sorry that *The Squire's Tale* was, after all, left unfinished. The MSS. preserve just *two* lines more than is here printed, and that is all. After remarking that “Here endeth the second part; and here beginneth the third part,” they proceed thus (in modernised spelling) :—

“Apollo whirleth up his car on high
Till that the god Mercurius' house the sly”—

and the sentence was never finished! The third line should begin with the words “He entreth”—and we were to be told that Apollo, *i. e.* the sun, proceeded in his upward, *i. e.* northern course in the zodiac, from his station in Aries (as in l. 386) till he had reached the house of Mercury, *i. e.* the sign of Gemini. In Chaucerian language, it was no longer March, but May. The lines are so characteristic as to be certainly genuine. But the rest is silence.

Well did Milton express the regret of *Il Penseroso* in the well-known lines :—

“ Or call up him that left half told
The story of Cambúscan bold,
Of Camball and of Algarsife,
And who had Canacé to wife,
That own'd the virtuous ring and glass;
And of the wondrous horse of brass

On which the Tartar king did ride ;
And if aught else great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of tourneys and of trophies hung,
Of forests and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear."

The present version.—The present version attempts to render three of Chaucer's tales into modern English in such a way as to give a faithful impression of the original, whilst at the same time not only obsolete words but obsolete idioms and modes of expression have been excluded. The version agrees with the original line for line, and provides, as it were, a commentary upon it, inasmuch as it shows, with sufficient exactness, the sense which the author intended to convey. In a few places, in order to preserve the original more closely, I have employed hyphens to indicate an old pronunciation. Thus, at p. 55, l. 50, the form 'Part-e-lote' means that the name is to be lengthened out into three syllables, so as to be more like *Partilote* than the modern *Partlet*. In particular, I would call the reader's attention to words ending in *-ion*, a suffix which was formerly pronounced, not as one syllable, but as two, especially at the end of a line. This peculiarity I have desired to retain, as in many instances it saves needless alteration ; and it is

indicated by an accent upon the *o*, as at p. 9, ll. 270, 271, where "subjecti-on" and "conditi-on" should be read as if they each contained four syllables. In all other respects, none but modern forms appear.

The Man of Law's Tale is the first in the second group (Group B) of the fragments of the *Canterbury Tales* as they appear in the MSS. It is immediately preceded by a couple of Prologues, which together take up 133 lines; so that the tale itself begins with l. 134. The lines are numbered as in my six-volume edition, *The Student's Chaucer*, and *The Globe Chaucer*, so that any line in the present version can be readily compared with the original.

The Nun's Priest's Tale properly occupies a place at the end of the same Group B, viz., lines 4011-4636; but in this instance the lines are numbered from 1 to 626. As both numberings are given in my six-volume edition and in *The Student's Chaucer*, the original form of any line can thus be easily found.

The Squire's Tale is the first tale in Group F, so that the numbering of the lines corresponds throughout.

CAMBRIDGE, November 17, 1903.

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THE MAN OF LAW'S TALE



PART I

IN Syria once there dwelt a company
Of merchants wealthy, honest, just and true, 135
Who far and wide would sell their spicery,
Their cloth of gold, their satins rich of hue ;
Their merchandise was all so fair and new
That every man to deal with them was prone,
And gladly sold them cargoes of their own. 140

It happened that the chief of all their sort
Determined to imperial Rome to wend :
Whether it were for traffic or for sport,
No messengers would they vouchsafe to send,
But came themselves to Rome, to gain their end ; 145
And in such quarters as they deemed the best
For every need, abode to take their rest.

These merchants thus had sojourned in that town
A certain while, their welfare to advance,
When casually the excellent renown 150
Of th' emperor's fair daughter, dame Custánce,
Reported was, with every circumstance,
Unto these Syrian merchants in such sort
From day to day, as here I shall report.

This was the general voice of every man :— 155
“ Our emperor of Rome, our sovereign free,
A daughter hath that, since the world began,
Both for her beauty and her sanctity,
Was never such another as is she.
We pray to God her honour to sustain ; 160
E'en over Europe she deserves to reign !

In her is beauty, yet apart from pride,
Youth, without folly or insensate glee ;
In all her works fair Virtue is her guide,
In her hath meekness slain all tyranny ; 165
The mirror she of gracious courtesy.
Her heart the chamber is of holiness,
Her hand gives alms to innocent distress.”

It was true, as God is true :—

Now to our purpose let us turn again. 170
These merchants filled their ships with cargoes new ;
Next of the maiden fair their leave have ta'en ;
Then home to Syria to depart were fain ;
There, as their wont was, sell their precious store,
And prosperously live :—I say no more. 175

It so befell, these merchants stood in grace
With him that held in Syria sovereignty ;
For when they came from any foreign place,
He alway sought, with generous courtesy,
To entertain them, seeking curiously 180
Tidings of sundry kingdoms, for to learn
Such wonders as their eyes or ears discern.

Amongst their other tidings, specially,
These merchants told him of the fair Custance
So noble a report, compendiously, 185
That soon this sultan, as in waking trance,
Would keep in memory every circumstance,
Till all his hopes and his desires he cast
On loving her alone, while life should last.

Perchance, within that large and open book 190
Which mankind call the heavens, it written was

In constellations, when his birth he took,
That he for love should find his death, alas !
For in the starry signs, as clear as glass,
Is written plain, for him to read that can, 195
The destined death of every mortal man.

For in the stars were written, long before,
Achilles' death, and Hector's ; destinies
Of Pompey, Julius, and as many more ;
The fated siege of Thebes ; of Hercules, 200
Of Samson, Turnus, and of Socrates
The deaths ; but mortal wits remain so dull,
That no man scarce can read his fate in full.

The sultan for his privy council sent,
And, shortly to dispose of all the case, 205
He soon hath fully shown them his intent,
And told them that, "except he might have grace
To wed Custance within a little space,
He were but dead" ; and charged them to reply
By shaping for his life some remedy. 210

Then divers sages divers counsels said ;
In argument they wrangled up and down ;
Full many a subtle reason forth they laid,

They speak of magic and collusion,
But finally, as in conclusion, 215
In none of these advantage they survey,
Nor—save in marriage—any prosperous way.

Yet therein saw they such perplexity,
By way of reason, for to speak all plain,
Because that there was such diversity 220
Between their sundry faiths, that they maintain,
They trow, “no Christian prince will e’er be fain
To teach his child the customs to revere
That Mahomet our prophet held so dear.”

Then answered he—“Yet rather than I lose 225
Custánce, will I myself a Christian be ;
I must be hers ; none other may I choose ;
From all your arguments now set me free.
Preserve my life, and, at the least, agree
The maid that rules my future life to gain ; 230
Nor let me linger long in passion’s pain.”

Why need I now each trivial point relate ?
I say, by treaty and embassy,
By seeking how the pope might mediate,
By help of holy church and chivalry, 235

In hope from Mahomet to set them free,
And more to further Christ's commandments dear,
To this they all agreed, as ye shall hear :—

How that the sultan and his courtiers great,
And last his subjects, all baptized should be ; 240
Then shall he gain Custáncé, in solemn state,
And, with her, gold in unknown quantity ;
And hereto found they good security.
To keep the bond they swore on either side ;
Now, fair Custáncé, Almighty God thee guide ! 245

Now fain would some expect me, as I guess,
To tell at length the loving purveyáncé
The emp'ror, in his lavish nobleness,
Hath made to grace his daughter, fair Custáncé.
Well may men know that so great ordinance 250
May ne'er be told within a little clause,
As was provided for so high a cause.

Bishops appointed were with her to wend,
And lords and ladies, knights of fair renown,
And other folks enough—behold the end ! 255
And notified it was, throughout the town,
That every wight, with great devoti6n,

Should pray to Christ to bless this marriage-band,
And speed their voyage to the Syrian land.

Now is the day arrived of journeying ; 260
I say, the woful fatal day is come,
That now may be no longer tarrying,
But forth have they proceeded, all and some.
Custánce, that was with sorrow all overcome,
Full pale arises, ready for to wend ; 265
For well she sees there is no other end.

Alas ! what wonder though she sorely wept,
Who now must seek a foreign nati3n,
Far from the friends, that tenderly her kept,
Now to be bound in full subjection 270
To one of all unknown condition !
Yes, husbands all are good, from days of yore,
As wives can witness !—let me say no more !

“Father,” she said, “Custánce, thy wretched child,
Thy dear young daughter, nurtured up so soft— 275
And you, my mother, so beloved and mild
Beyond all other things, save Christ aloft,
Custánce, your child, herself commendeth oft
To your kind love ; to Syria must I go,
Nor ever shall your gracious presence know. 280



2

THE MAN OF LAW'S TALE

-

And right anon she for her council sent,
Who came in haste, enquiring what she meant ;
And when this folk were all assembled near,
She took her place, and said as ye shall hear.

“My lords,” quoth she, “well know ye, every one, 330
How that my son hath purposed to forswear
The holy precepts of our Alkorán,
Given by Mahomet, God’s messengér ;
But first a mighty vow I here declare,
That life shall sooner from my body part 335
Than Mahomet’s wise teaching from my heart !

What but remorse of soul and thraldom fell
Shall from this new belief to us betide,
And afterward to find ourselves in hell
Because our prophet’s precepts we denied ? 340
But will ye in my counsel, lords, confide
To act with me, assenting to my lore ?
Then will I make us safe, for evermore ! ”

Then swore they and assented, every man,
To live with her and die, and by her stand ; 345
And each in the readiest way he can,
They would gather each a band ;

And thus this enterprise she took in hand
Which ye shall duly hear me well report ;
And gave them all her counsel in this sort :— 350

“ We first shall feign this Christendom to take ;
Cold water will not grieve us but a mite ;
Then shall I such a feast and revel make
That, as I trow, the sultan shall I quite.
For, though his wife be christen'd ne'er so white, 355
She shall have need to wash away the red,
Though she a fount of water with her led.”

O sultanness, root of iniquity !
Thou new Semiramis, for crime renowned !
O serpent under femininity, 360
Like to the serpent deep in hell long bound ;
O falsest woman ! All that may confound
Virtue and innocence by malice fell,
Thou nest of every vice, in thee doth dwell !

O Satan, envious since that woeful day 365
When thou wast chased from Paradise so fair,
To women know'st thou how to make thy way ;
Thou taughtest Eve to bring mankind to care ;
Thou wouldst this Christian marriage soon impair ;

Thine instrument of ill, alas, the while ! 370
Thou mak'st of women, when thou wouldst beguile!

This sultanness, whom thus I blame and chide,
Let privily her council go their way.
Why should I longer in delays abide ?
She rideth to the sultan on a day, 375
And told him, she her faith aside would lay,
And Christendom of priestly hands receive,
Repentant, and her heathen rites would leave ;

Beseeching him to grant her so much joy,
That she the Christian men might nobly feast ; 380
“ To please them well will I my pains employ.”
The sultan said, “ We come at your behest,”
And kneeling, thanked her for that kind request.
So glad was he, he scarce knew what to say ;
She kissed her son, and homeward goes her way. 385

PART II

THE Christian folk at length have touched the ground
Of Syria, with a vast and stately rout ;
The sultan soon hath sent his message round
First to his mother, next his realm throughout,
And said his wife had landed, out of doubt, 390
And prayed his mother ride his queen to greet,
As for the honour of his realm was meet.

Great was the concourse, rich was the array
When Syrians to the Roman troop drew near ;
The mother of the sultan, rich and gay, 395
Receiveth her with such a joyful cheer
As any mother might her daughter dear ;
And to the nearest city close beside
With gentle pace in festive wise they ride.

I trow, the triumph of great Julius, 400
Of which that Lucan maketh such a boast,
Was not more noble, nor more curious
Than was th' assembly of this blissful host.
But yet this scorpion, where she hated most,
This sultanness, for all her flattering, 405
In secret sought full mortally to sting.

The sultan comes himself soon after this,
So royally, that wonder is to tell,
And welcomes her with every joy and bliss ;
And thus in mirth and joy I let them dwell. 410
The fruit of these events I seek to tell.
When time arrived, men deemed it for the best
That revels ceased, and all should go to rest.

The hour arrived ; this aged sultanness
Hath ordered all the feast whereof I told ; 415
And forward to the feast the Christians press
In close array, rejoicing, young and old.
Here may men pomp and revelry behold,
And dainties more than I can number here ;
But ere they rose, they bought it all too dear. 420

O sudden woe ! that alway dost succeed
To worldly bliss, besprent with bitterness

That ends the joy of every worldly deed !
Woe occupies the end of joyfulness.
Hear my advice, to save thee from distress : 425
Upon thy joyful day still bear in mind
The unknown woe or harm that comes behind.

For shortly to relate it in a word,
The sultan and the Christians, every one,
Were stabbed or hewn in pieces at the board, 430
And none were spared but dame Custánce alone.
This aged sultanness, this cursed crone,
Hath with her friends performed this cursed deed ;
For she herself would all the country lead.

And of the Syrian converts every one 435
Who, with his lord, the Christian faith embraced,
Was hewn in pieces, ere the feast was done.
And Custance have they taken, in hot haste,
And in a ship, all rudder-less, have placed,
And bade her learn to sail the tossing main 440
From Syria back to Italy again.

A certain treasure that she thither brought,
Of victuals eke sufficient quantity
They gave her, nor of clothing lacked she aught ;

And forth she saileth o'er the open sea. 445
My sweet Custánce, full of benignity,
O emperor's fair daughter, young and dear,
Thy vessel may the Lord of fortune steer.

She blesseth her, and with full piteous cry
Unto the cross of Christ thus prayeth she :— 450
“ O blissful altar, cross of Christ on high,
Red with the Lamb's blood, source of clemency,
That washed the world from th' old iniquity,
Me from the fiend and from his clutches keep
The day when storms shall drown me in the deep ! 455

Victorious tree ! protection of the true !
That only wast found worthy for to bear
The King of heaven, with all His wounds yet new,
(That Lamb so white, that hurt was with the spear,)
Expelling fiends alike from him and her 460
O'er whom thine arms protectingly extend,
Save me, and give me strength my life to mend.”

Long years and days this creature floats afar,
From Grecian sea, and through Morocco's strait,
As by the fortune of her ruling star, 465
On many a sorry meal compelled to bait ;
And many a time shall she her death await,

Until the wild waves shall her vessel drive
Thither, where she was destined to arrive.

Well may men ask me, why she was not slain? 470
Or, at the feast, who might her body save?
And to that question answer I again—
Who rescued Daniel in the dreadful cave,
When every wight save he, both lord and knave,
Was, ere he well could flee, by lions torn? 475
None save that God that in his heart was borne.

God chose His wondrous miracle to show
In her, that we His mighty works should mark!
Christ, the great remedy for every woe,
By certain means, as knows each learned clerk, 480
Doth things for certain ends, that seem full dark
To human wits, too ignorant to learn
What His all-seeing prudence can discern.

Though safely from the fatal feast she went,
Who kept her from her drowning in the sea? 485
Who in the fish's maw kept Jonah pent
Till he was spouted up at Nineveh?
Well may men know, it was no wight but He
That kept from drowning Israel's chosen band
With dry feet passing through the sea to land. 490

Who bade the spirits four of storms to rest,
That had the power to injure land and sea?—
“Both North and South, and also East and West,
Do harm to neither land, nor sea, nor tree!”
He who gave that command was surely He 495
That from the tempest’s power this woman kept,
As well the while she woke as when she slept.

Whence should this woman her subsistence have?
What food three years and more sufficed her need?
Who fed th’ Egyptian Mary in the cave 500
Or in the desert? None but Christ, indeed.
It was as great a miracle to feed
Five thousand with five loaves and fishes twain.
God sent her plenty in her greatest pain.

Thus driving onwards, tow’rds our coast she came, 505
Throughout our northern sea, till at the last,
Under a castle, of an unknown name,
F’ar in Northumberland, the waves her cast;
And in the sand her vessel stuck so fast
That thence it might not move, throughout a tide; 510
The will of Christ was, she should there abide.

The warden of this castle doth repair
To see this wreck, and all the ship he sought,

And found this weary woman, full of care ;
And also found the treasure she had brought. 515
Then, in her language, mercy she besought,
The life out of her body to set free ;
In so great sorrow and distress was she.

A kind of broken Latin could she speak,
Yet was it such as men might understand ; 520
The warden, when he would no further seek,
This woeful woman bringeth safe to land ;
She kneeleth down, accepting God's command.
But who she was, she would to none confide,
For force or favour, though she therefore died. 525

“ She was so sore bewildered in the sea,
She nigh had lost her memory ”—she replies ;
The warden showed with her such sympathy,
And eke his wife, that pitying tears arise.
So diligent was she, in every wise, 530
To serve and please each creature in the place,
That all men loved her who beheld her face.

This warden and dame Hermengild his wife
Were pagana, like the country everywhere ;
But Hermengild loved Custance as her life, 535

And she so long a while hath sojourned there,
In constant prayer, with many a bitter tear,
Till Jesu hath converted, by His grace,
Dame Hermengild, his wife who kept the place.

In all that land no Christian band was found ; 540
All Christian folk did from that country flee
From pagans, that had conquered all around
The districts of the North, by land and sea ;
To Wales fled Christian folk of each degree
Of Britons old, then dwelling in this isle ; 545
There was their harbour of retreat the while.

Yet were not Christian Britons so exiled
But some remained that, in all secrecy,
Still honoured Christ, and heathen folk beguiled ;
And near the castle dwelt such Christians three. 550
The one of them was blind, and could not see
Save with that inward vision of the mind
Wherewith men see still, though they may be blind.

Bright was the sunshine on that summer's day,
Wherefore the warden and his wife did go, 555
And Custance, taking still the nearest way
Towards the sea, a furlong's length or so,

For pleasure, and to ramble to and fro ;
And near this blind man in their walk they passed,
Crooked and old, with sightless eyes shut fast. 560

“ In Christ’s dear name,” anon the blind man cried,
“ Dame Hermengild, restore my sight again.”
This lady at his prayer grew terrified,
Lest that her husband—shortly to explain—
For sake of Jesus, would her soon have slain. 565
But Custance, boldly, bade her straight fulfil,
As daughter of His church, Christ’s holy will.

The warden was abashed to see this sight,
And said—“ Whereto amounteth this affair ? ”
Then answered Custance, “ Sir, ’tis Jesus’ might, 570
That helpeth folk to flee from Satan’s snare.”
Therewith so well did she our faith declare
That she this warden, ere that it was eve,
Converted, and on Christ made him believe.

This warden was not master of the place 575
Whereof I spake, where Custance came to land,
But kept it strongly, many a winter’s space,
For Alla, king of all Northumberland,
A king full wise, and mighty of his hand

Against the stones as they may learn full plain; 580
But in my story will I turn again.

Thus the good watches to beguile,
Saw in her chamber the prisoner care,
And nam'd her name to watch her with a wife,
And made a young knight that remain'd there 585
To love to share her love to share,
His name, would bring his sin to grievous ill,
To see he soon might win her to his will.

He watch'd her, but all vainly thought,
No sin would she commit, in any way: 590
And he despise, he compass'd in his thought
To shame her death her sin to betray.
He watch'd till the warden was away,
And privily, upon a night, he crept
In Hermengild's chamber while she slept. 595

Wary of watching in their orisons,
There Casteau slept, and Hermengild thereto;
This knight, led by the fiend's temptations,
All silently towards the sleepers drew,
And cut the throat of Hermengild a-two, 600
And laid the bloody knife by dame Casteau,
And went his way; God give him foul mischance!

Therewith returned this warden home again
With Alla, king of all the country round,
And saw his wife in piteous manner slain, 605
Whereat he wrung his hands, in tears nigh drowned,
And in the bed the bloody knife he found
Beside Custánce ; alas ! what could she say ?
For very woe her wit was all away.

To Alla was recounted this mischance, 610
And eke the time, and where, and in what way
Was found within the ship the fair Custánce,
As herebefore you heard me fully say.
In Alla's heart rose pity and dismay
When he beheld a creature so benign 615
In misery undeserved so sadly pine.

For as the lamb towards his death is brought,
So stands this innocent before the king ;
The treacherous knight that hath this treason wrought
Bears witness how she did this cruel thing ; 620
But none the less arose great murmuring
Amongst the folk, who say—" they cannot guess
That she hath done so great a wickedness :

For they have ever seen her virtuous,
And Hermengilda loved she as her life." 625

Of this bare witness all men in that house
Save only he, that slew her with his knife.
Then grew the king's mind with suspicion rife
Of all his story, till he thought to go
More deeply in his search the truth to know. 630

Alas, Custánce! Thou hast no champión,
Nor canst thou claim the combat, welladay!
But He, that died for our redemption,
And Satan bound (who lieth where he lay)—
Be He thy mighty champion this day! 635
For, saving Christ some miracle may show,
All innocently thou to death shalt go.

She knelt upon her knees, and thus she said:—
“Immortal God, that savedst once Susanna
From witness false, and thou! O gracious Maid, 640
Mary I mean, the daughter of Saint Anna,
Before whose Child the angels sing Hosanna,
If I be guiltless of this felony,
Now be my succour! Otherwise I die!”

Have ye not some time seen the pallid face, 645
Amongst a crowd, of one by escort led
Towards his death, when he might gain no grace,

Whose colour in his face hath seemed so dead
That all might know the man thus ill bestead
In midst of all the faces in that rout ? 650
So stands Custánce, and gazeth round about.

O queens that live in such prosperity,
Ye duchesses and ladies, every one,
Now have some ruth on her adversity ;
An emperor's fair daughter stands alone ! 655
She hath no wight to whom to make her moan.
O princely blood, that standest in such dread,
Far are thy friends in this thy greatest need.

Alla the king hath such compassión
(As gentle heart is filled with sympathy), 660
That from his eyes the water ran adown.
“ Now go in haste, and fetch a book,” quoth he,
“ And if this knight will swear thereon that she
This woman slew, we yet will take good heed
Whom to appoint to judge this doubtful deed.” 665

A British book, wherein were Gospels four,
Was fetched, and on this book he swore anon
She guilty was ; and, even as he swore,
A hand so struck him on the neck-nape bone

That down he fell therewith, as falls a stone, 670
And both his eyes outstarted from his face,
In sight of all the people in the place.

A voice above the throng was heard to cry,
That said :—" Thou hast accused of wickedness
The holy church's daughter publicly ; 675
Thus hast thou done, and yet I held my peace : "—
Whereat the crowd's amazement doth increase.
As folk bewildered stood they, every one,
For dread of vengeance, save Custáncé alone.

Great was the dread, and great the sore lament 680
Of them that had such wrong suspici6n
Against this Custance mild and innocent.
And by this marvel, in conclusi6n,
And by Custáncé's mediati6n,
The king, and many another in that place 685
Converted were, we thank our Saviour's grace !

This treacherous knight was slain for his untruth
By judgement of King Alla, hastily ;
And yet had Custance of his death great ruth.
And after this did Christ, benignantly, 690
Make Alla wed, with all solemnity,

This holy maid, so fair and virtuous seen,
And thus He made her at the last a queen.

But who was woeful, if I may not lie,
Of this event but Donegild the shrew, 695
The king's own mother, full of tyranny?
She thought her cursed heart would burst in two;
This was not what she hoped that he would do.
She thought it scorn, that thus he should decide
To take a foreign creature for his bride. 700

Of all the chaff and straw I care not, I,
To make so long a tale as of the corn.
Why should I tell you all the pageantry
Of wedding-feasts, or how each course was borne?
Who bloweth in a trumpet or a horn? 705
The fruit of every tale we seek to say;
They eat and drink, and dance and sing and play.

The king, when Custance was with child anon, 715
Unto his bishop and his warden eke
Commended her, the while himself was gone
To Scotland-ward, his foemen for to seek.
And fair Custance, that was so sweet and meek,
Hath now so long time gone with child, until 720
She keeps her chamber, and awaits God's will.

The time is come, an infant male she bare
And named Mauritius at his christening ;
The warden summons forth a messenger,
And writes a letter to the absent king, 725
How that at last hath chanced this blissful thing,
With other tidings needful for to say ;
He takes the letter, and pursues his way.

This messenger, more favour to obtain,
To Alla's mother rides the nearest way, 730
Saluting her in his obsequious vein :—
“Madam,” said he, “now let your heart be gay,
And thank the Lord a thousand times a day !
My lady queen hath child, without a doubt,
To joy and bliss of all this realm about. 735

Lo ! here the letters that recite this thing,
That I must bear with all the haste I may.
If you have message to your son the king,
I am your servant, both by night and day.”
Then answered Donegild, “At this time, nay ! 740
But here all night I bid thee take thy rest ;
Tomorrow will I say what seemeth best.”

This messenger drank deeply ale and wine,
And stolen was his letter secretly

Out of his box, while slept he like a swine ; 745
And counterfeited was all cunningly
Another letter, wrought full sinfully,
Addressed unto the king, of this event,
As from the warden, unto this intent :—

The letter said—“ delivered was the queen 750
Of such a fiendly creature, formed to scare,
That in the castle none so bold was seen
That durst awhile its hateful presence bear.
The mother was a fiend, by chance sent there,
Conveyed by wicked charms or sorcery, 755
And every wight doth hate her company.”

Sad was this king to read this letter sly,
But to no wight he told his sorrows sore ;
But with his own right hand he wrote reply :—
“ Welcome the gift of Christ for evermore 760
To me, who now am learned in His lore !
Lord, welcome let Thy will and pleasure be !
My will right humbly I submit to Thee !

Preserve this child, yea, whether foul or fair,
And eke my wife, till home once more I see. 765
Christ, when He list, may send me yet an heir

More dearly welcome than is this to me."
This letter seals he, weeping secretly,
Which to this messenger was giv'n anew ;
And forth he goes ; there is no more to do. 770

O messenger replete with drunkenness,
Strong is thy breath, thy limbs are tottering aye !
And thou bewrayest soon all secretness.
Thy memory fails, thou prattlest like a jay ;
Thy face is changed into a new array. 775
Where drunkenness prevails in any rout,
No secret can be hid, without a doubt.

Oh Donegild, I find no English fit
To tell thy malice and thy tyranny !
And therefore to the fiend I thee commit ; 780
Let *him* endite of all thy treachery !
Fie, manlike, fie ! but saying this, I lie ;
Fie, *fiendlike* spirit ! For I dare to tell,
Though here thou walk, thy spirit lives in hell !

This messenger comes from the king again, 785
And at king Alla's mother's court doth light ;
And she of his arrival was full fain,
And pleased him well in all that e'er she might.

He drank until his girdle seemed too tight ;
He sleepeth, and he snores in swinish wise 790
All night, until the sun began to rise.

Again his letters stole she, every one,
And counterfeited one that you shall hear :—
“ The king his warden strictly bids anon
On pain of hanging by a doom severe, 795
He must not tolerate, for love or fear,
Custánce within his kingdom to delay
A quarter-hour beyond the third full day ;

But in the ship in which she came to land,
Her and her infant young, with all their gear, 800
He must enclose, and thrust it from the strand,
And charge her nevermore to venture near.”
O my Custánce, well may thy spirit fear
And sleeping in thy dream feel bitter woe,
When Donegild contrived this cruel blow ! 805

This messenger next morning, when he rose,
Back to the castle went the nearest way,
And to the warden straight the letter shows,
Who, reading what this cruel scroll doth say,
Full oft exclaimed “ alas ! ” and “ welladay ! ” 810

“Lord Christ,” quoth he, “how may this world survive,
So full of sin is every wight alive !

O mighty God, if such Thy providence,
Since Thou art rightful Judge, how may it be
That Thou wilt suffer stain on innocence, 815
Whilst wicked folk reign in prosperity ?
O good Custánce, alas ! now woe is me
That I must be thy judge, or undergo
A death of shame ! No other way I know.”

Sore wept both young and old in all that place, 820
When that the king this cursed letter sent,
And Custance, with a pale and deathly face,
The fourth day, tow’rd the ship dejected went ;
But ne’ertheless, she takes in good intent
The will of Christ, and kneeling on the shore, 825
Said —“ Lord, Thy will be welcome, evermore !

He that once kept me from unrighteous blame
When ye my sojourn here did erst allow,
He still can keep me from all harm and shame
In perilous seas, although I see not how. 830
As strong as e’er He was, remains He now.
In Him I trust, and in His mother dear
That in my sail, and can my vessel steer.”

Her little child lay weeping on her arm,
And, kneeling, piteously to him she said— 835

“Peace! little son! I do to thee no harm.”
With that, she drew the kerchief from her head,
And o’er his little eyes it softly laid;
And in her arms she lulleth it full fast,
And up to heav’n her trusting eyes she cast. 840

Then quoth she—“Mary, Mother, and blessed Maid,
By womankind’s temptation—ah! ’tis true,
Mankind was lost, and unto death betrayed,
For which thy Son upon a cross they slew;
Thy blissful eyes His agonies did rue; 845
Then is there none that may compare thy woe
With any torment that mankind can know.

Thou saw’st thy Child thus slain before thine eyes,
But I my little child alive survey!
Now Lady bright! to whom ascend our cries, 850
Thou glory of womanhood, thou guiding ray,
Haven of refuge, and bright star of day,
Pity my child, O thou whose gentleness
Hath pity on each mourner in distress!

O little child, what guilt is on thine head, 855
Who from reproach of sin as yet art free?

Why will thy cruel father have thee dead ?
Oh, mercy ! warden dear ! ” entreated she :
“ Now let my little child dwell here with thee ;
Or, if thou dar’st not rescue him, for blame, 860
Yet stoop, and kiss him in his father’s name ! ”

Therewith she looketh backward to the land,
And said—“ Farewell, O husband pitiless ! ”
And up she riseth, walking down the strand
Towards the ship ; the crowd behind her press ; 865
And ever she prays her child to hold his peace ;
And takes her leave, and with a holy intent
She blesseth her ; and unto ship she went.

Right well provisioned was this ship, indeed,
Abundantly for her, a full long space, 870
What other necessaries she might need
She had sufficient—lauded be God’s grace !
May God fair wind and weather send apace,
And bring her home ! No better can I say ;
Now in the sea she driveth forth her way. 875

Here endeth the second part. The third part follows.

PART III

ALLA the king comes home, soon after this,
Unto the castle of the which I told,
And asketh where his wife and infant is ;
The warden felt his heart within grow cold,
And plainly all the matter hath he told 880
As ye have heard ; I cannot tell it better ;
And shows the king his seal and eke his letter.

And said—"My lord, as you commanded me,
So have I done, for fear of threatened pain."
The messenger was tortured, till that he 885
Must needs confess and tell them, clear and plain,
From night to night, in what place he had lain ;
And thus, by wit and subtle questioning,
Imagined was from whom this harm did spring.

The hand was traced out that the letter wrote, 890
And all the envy of this cursed deed ;
But how this was discovered, know I not.
The end was this, that Alla, with all speed,
His mother slew, as men may plainly read,
As traitor to her true allegiance ; 895
Thus endeth Donegild with sad mischance.

The sorrow that this Alla, night and day,
Made for his wife, and for his child alsó,
There is no tongue that all rehearse it may.
But now will I once more to Custance go, 900
Who floateth in the sea, in pain and woe,
Five years and more, for such was Christ's command,
Until her ship was driven safe to land.

Beneath a heathen castle, at the last—
But in my text its name I cannot find— 905
Custance and eke her child the sea up-cast.
Almighty God, that saveth all mankind,
Have He dame Custance and her child in mind,
Now fallen on a heathen land again,
In perilous plight, as I shall soon make plain. 910

Down from the castle cometh many a wight
To this ship and on Custance.

But shortly, from the castle-gate by night
The warden's steward (God him send mischance !)
Forsaker of his faith's allegiance, 915
Came to her ship alone, and said that he,
Would she or would not, must her lover be !

Then was this wretched woman woe-begone !
Her child cried, and herself cried piteously !
But blessed Mary sent her help anon ; 920
For, as she struggled well and mightily,
The thief fell overboard all suddenly,
And in the sea, for punishment, was drowned ;
And thus hath Christ kept Custance safe and sound.

How could this feeble woman have this strength
Her to defend against this runagate ?
Goliath great, immeasurable of length,
How could young David all thy boast abate, 935
So youthful and of armour desolate ?
How durst he look upon thy dreadful face ?
Well may men see, it was but by God's grace !

Who gave to Judith strength or hardiness
To slay duke Holophernes in his tent, 940
And to deliver out of wretchedness

God's people? This I ask to this intent,
That e'en as God such might and vigour sent
To these, and kept them safe from all mischance,
So sent He might and vigour to Custánce. 945

Forth goes her ship, right through the narrow mouth
Of Ceuta and Gibraltar, driving aye,
Now sometimes West, and sometimes North or South,
And sometimes East, full many a weary day,
Till Christ's dear mother—blest be she alway! 950
Provided, in her endless tenderness,
To make an end of all her heaviness.

Now leave we for awhile Custánce alone,
Whilst of Rome's emperor awhile we tell,
That out of Syria hath by letters known 955
The slaughter of Christian folk, and despite fell
Done to his daughter by a fiend of hell,
I mean the cursed wicked sultaness,
That at the feast bade slay both more and less :—

Wherewith this emperor hath sent anon 960
His senator, with regal ordinance,
And other lords, God knows, full many a one,
On Syrians all his vengeance to enhance.

They burn and slay, and bring them to mischance
Full many a day ; but shortly, in the end, 965
Homeward to Rome they hasten them to wend.

This senator victorious doth return
To Romeward, sailing on full royally,
And met the ship still driving—as we learn—
Wherein Custánce was drifting piteously. 970
In no wise knew he who she was, nor why
She was in such array ; nor aught she saith
To tell her rank, e'en though they threatened death.

He bringeth her to Rome, and to his wife
He gave her and her little child alsó, 975
And with this senator she led her life.
Thus can Our Lady rescue from her woe
Woeful Custánce, and others, high and low.
Thus a long season dwelt she in that place
In works of holiness, as was her grace. 980

The senator's good wife—her aunt she was ;
But for all that she knew her none the more.
No longer will I dwell upon this case,
But to the king, of whom I spake before,
Who for his wife long weeps and sighs full sore, 985

Will I return ; and thus I leave Custáncé
Under the senator's fair governance.

King Alla, he that had his mother slain,
At length with such repentance great did grieve
That, to recount it shortly, clear and plain, 990
To Rome he comes, his penance to receive,
And, as the pope appointeth, to retrieve
His faith in full, and Jesu Christ besought
To pardon all the wicked works he wrought.

The story soon throughout all Rome is sent, 995
How this king Alla comes in pilgrimage,
By harbingers that still before him went.
This senator, as usual in that age,
To meet him went with all his equipage,
Both to display his high magnificence, 1000
And eke to show the king some reverence.

This noble senator great welcome pays
To Alla, who requites him as was due ;
Each to the other honour great displays.
And so befell, that, in a day or two 1005
This senator towards King Alla drew
To feast ; and shortly, as I shall not lie,
Custáncé's son went in his company.

Some men would say, by instance of Custáncé
The senator hath brought him to the feast ; 1010
I cannot tell you every circumstance ;
Be as it may, there was he, at the least ;
And this is sooth, that at his mother's hest,
Before the king, throughout the banquet's space,
The child stood gazing in King Alla's face. 1015

King Alla at this child began to wonder,
And to the senator exclaimed anon,
" Whose is that noble child that standeth yonder ? "
" That know I not "—replied he—" by Saint John ;
A mother he hath, but father hath he none 1020
That e'er I knew " ;—but, shortly to expound,
He told King Alla how the child was found.

" But God knows," quoth this senator, " that never
So virtuous a lady in my life
Saw I as she, nor such have heard of ever, 1025
Of earthly women—be she maid or wife.
I say that sooner would she feel a knife
Pierce through her breast, than know a moment's shame ;
There is not one that may traduce her name."

Now was this child as like unto Custáncé 1030
As was it possible for child to be ;

King Alla hath in mind the countenance
Of dame Custáncé, and thereon pondered he,
Considering if his mother could be she
That was his wife, and secretly did sigh ; 1035
Then from the table hastily did hie.

“ In sooth,” he thought, “ some phantom fills my head !
I ought, as reason bids my mind assent,
To know that in the sea my wife is dead.”
But afterwards he made this argument — 1040
“ How know I, but that Christ hath hither sent
My wife by sea, as when He sent her erst
To land of mine from whence she came at first ? ”

Home with the senator that afternoon
Went Alla, to explore this wondrous chance ; 1045
To whom this senator hath honour done,
And hastily hath sent to fetch Custáncé.
Well may ye deem, she had no wish to dance,
On learning what was meant by such command ;
She scarce upon her feet knew how to stand. 1050

Fairly he greeted her, when once they met ;
He wept, that it was pitiable to see ;
Fo it glance he upon her set,

Assuredly he knew that this was she.
And she, for sorrow, is dumb as is a tree ; 1055
So was her heart afflicted by distress
When she remembered his unkindness.

Thrice fell she in a swoon before his sight ;
He wept, and makes excuses piteously ;
“May God,” quoth he, “and all His saints so bright 1060
Upon my soul have mercy, verily !
For of your harm as innocent am I
As Maurice here, my son, is like your face ;
Else may the fiend now fetch me from this place ! ”

Long was the sobbing and the bitter pain 1065
Before their woeful hearts at length could cease ;
Great was the pity, hearing them complain,
By which complaints their woe they yet increase ;
I pray you all my labour to release ;
I could not tell their woe before tomorrow, 1070
I am so weary for to speak of sorrow.

But finally, when known was all the sooth,
That Alla was all guiltless of her pain,
I trow, they kissed a hundred times for ruth,
And such a bliss was made betwixt the twain 1075

That, save the gladness that in heaven doth reign,
Was none such that mankind in ages past
Hath seen, or shall see while the world shall last.

Then she besought her husband lovingly,
In recompence of all their fate malign, 1080
That he would ask her father specially
That, of his majesty, he would incline
To vouchsafe with him some day for to dine ;
She prayed him eke that he, by any way,
No word of her would to her father say. 1085

Some men relate, this child Mauritius
Went with this message to the emperor ;
But Alla was not so discourteous
As to a monarch of such sovereign power
As he that was of Christendom the flower, 1090
To send a child ; then is it best to deem
He went himself ; and so it well may seem.

The emperor hath granted courteously
To come to dinner, as he him besought ;
And, as I read, he gazed full steadfastly 1095
Upon the child ; and on his daughter thought.
Then Alla home returns, and as he ought

Provided for the feast in every wise,
As far as could his forethought best devise.

The morrow-scame, and Alla took his way, 1100
And eke his wife, this emperor to meet ;
And forth they ride with joy and great display.
And when she saw her father in the street,
Alighted soon, and knelt down at his feet.
"Father," quoth she, "your child Custáncé, I ween, 1105
Is now from your remembrance banished clean.

I am your loving child, Custáncé," quoth she,
"Whom once to Syrian land you bade to-hie,
She, father, who in the tempestuous sea
Was sent alone, as one condemned to die ; 1110
Now, gentle father, for your grace I cry ;
Let me no more to heathen land repair,
But thank my lord here for his loving care."

Who can recount the joy, the gladsome cheer,
Betwixt these three, thus opportunely met ? 1115
But now my story to an end draws near,
The time runs fast ; no tedious speech ye get.
These happy folk to dinner have them set.
In joy and bliss at meat I let them dwell
A thousand fold beyond what I can tell. 1120

This Maurice afterward was emperor
Made by the pope, and lived full Christianly.
To Christ's dear church he honour gave and store ;
But all his story let I now pass by ;
Of Custance is my tale especially.— 1125
In Roman story men may lightly find
His life in full ; I bear it not in mind.

King Alla, when a fitting time he found,
With fair Custance, his holy wife so sweet,
Returned the nearest way to English ground, 1130
Where long they lived in joy and actions meet.
But worldly joy is all too swift and fleet,
And little lasts ; for time for none will stay,
But with the hour doth change to night from day.

Who ever lived in such delight one day 1135
That neither was he moved by conscience,
By ire or appetite, or terror's sway,
Envy, or pride, or passion, or offence ?
I say this but to yield us evidence
That little while in joyous consonance 1140
Lasteth the bliss of Alla with Custance.

For death, that takes of high and low his rent,
When past was scarce a year, as best I guess,

Out of this world King Alla hath he rent,
For whom Custánce hath full great heaviness. 1145
Now let us pray to God, his soul to bless!
And dame Custánce, the sequel for to say,
Towards the town of Rome directs her way.

To Rome hath come this creature good and fair,
And findeth there her friends yet whole and sound; 1150
Now is she 'scaped from perils and from care;
And when that she her father dear hath found,
Down on her knees she falleth to the ground;
Weeping for tenderness with blithesome mood,
A hundred thousand times she praises God. 1155

In virtue and in many a holy deed
They live together, and ne'er asunder wend.
Till death them parted, such a life they lead.
And now farewell, my tale is at an end.
Now Jesu Christ, that of His might can send 1160
Joy after woe, preserve us in His grace,
And keep us all, assembled in this place!—Amen.

Here endeth the Tale of the Man of Law.

THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE.
CHANTICLEER AND PERTELOTE;
OR, THE COCK AND THE FOX.



A WIDOW, well advanced in life's short road,
Was sometime dwelling in a small abode,
Beside a grove that stood within a dale.
This widow, sirs, of whom I tell my tale,
Since that same day when she was last a wife, 5
In patience led a simple, humble life,
For little were her chattels and her rent.
By husbandry of such as God her sent,
She found herself, and eke her daughters twain.
Three well-grown sows she had, and yet again 10
Three cows, and eke a sheep whose name was Mall.
Full sooty was her bower, and eke her hall,
In which she ate full many a slender meal.
Of pungent sauce she needed not a deal.
No dainty morsel glided down her throat; 15
Her diet well accorded with her coat.

Repletion never caused her health to fail ;
 A temperate diet kept her sound and hale,
 With exercise, and well-contented mind.
 The gout ne'er stay'd her, if to dance inclined, 20
 Nor apoplexy ever pained her head.
 No wine she ever drank, no white or red.
 Her board was mostly served with *white* and *black*,
 Milk and brown bread, of which she found no lack.
 Fried bacon, and at times an egg or twain ; 25
 To be a dairy-woman was she fain.

A yard she had, encompassed all about
 With palings, and a dry ditch there-without,
 In which she kept a cock, named Chanticleer ;
 Of crowing had he in the land no peer. 30
 His voice was merrier than the organ's tone
 In church on solemn mass-days loudly blown.
 His crowing more exactly told the hour
 Than did the great clock in the abbey-tower.
 By nature each ascending point he view'd 35
 Of th' equinoctial in that latitude ;
 For when degrees full fifteen had ascended,
 Then crew he, that it could not be amended.
 His crested comb was coral-red and tall,
 Embattled as it were a castle-wall ; 40

His bill was black, like shining jet to view,
 His legs and eke his toes were azure-blue.
 His talons whiter than the lily showed,
 And like new-burnished gold his colour glowed.
 This gentle cock had in his government 45
Hens seven, which were kept for his content,
 That were his sisters and his lovers too,
 And wondrous like to him in splendid hue.
 Of which the brightest-coloured in the throat
 Was rightly named 'fair damsel Part-e-lote.' 50
 Courteous she was, discreet, and debonair,
 Companionable, and bare herself so fair
 E'en since the day that she was seven nights old,
 That certainly she held the heart in hold
 Of Chanticleer, fast-locked in every limb; 55
 He loved her so, that well therewith was him.
 But such a joy it was to hear them sing,
 When that the rising sun began to spring,
 In sweet accord—"My loved one's far away!"
 For at that time, as I have heard men say, 60
 Both beasts and birds could plainly sing and speak.

And so befell, that once, ere morn did break,
 As Chanticleer amongst his spouses all
 Sat on his perch, that stretched across the hall,

And next him sat this fair dame Pert-e-lote, 65
 This Chanticleer gan groan within his throat,
 As one that in his dream is troubled sore.
 And when that Pert-e-lote thus heard him roar,
 She was aghast, and said—"O husband dear,
 What aileth you, to groan as if in fear? 70
 Ye be a very sleeper! Fie! for shame!"
 He answered straight, and thus he cried—"My dame,
 I pray you, moderate your grief and dread!
 Alas! I dreamt I was so ill bestead
 Right now, that yet my heart is sore with fright. 75
 May God"—quoth he—"my dream expound aright,
 And keep my body out of prison base!
 I dreamt, that up and down I walked apace
 Within our yard, where that I saw a beast,
 Was like a hound, who would have made arrest 80
 Upon my body, and would have had me dead.
 His colour was betwixt a yellow and red,
 And tipped his tail was, as were both his ears,
 With black, unlike the remnant of his hairs.
 His snout was small, with eyes that glowed severe, 85
 Still, for his look, I almost die for fear;
 'This caused me all my groaning, questionless."
 "Away!"—quoth she—"fie on you! spiritless!
 Alas!"—quoth she—"for, by yon heav'n above,

Now have ye lost my heart and all my love ; 90
 I cannot love a coward, by my faith.
 For truly, what-so any woman saith,
 We all desire, if e'er it so may be,
 To have our husbands hardy, wise, and free,
 Secret, no niggard, nor of foolish cast, 95
 Not one that at a weapon stares aghast,
 Nor yet a boaster, by yon heav'n above !
 How durst ye say for shame, unto your love,
 That anything might make you thus afeard ?
 Have ye no manly heart, yet have a beard ? 100
 Alas ! and can ye fear such idle shows ?
 In dream is naught but vanity, God knows.
 Dreams are engendred of repletións,
 And oft of fumes, and of complexiós,
 When humours are abundant in a wight. 105
 Forsooth this dream, which ye have dreamt to-night,
 Comes of the too great superfluity
 Of your red humour choleric"—quoth she—
 "Which causeth folk to dream, in vivid dreams,
 Of arrows, and of fire with flaming beams ; 110
 Of beasts full huge, to bite that lie in wait,
 Of fighting, and of whelps both small and great ;
 Or melancholic humour, rising high,
 Causeth full many a man, in sleep, to cry

For fear of great black bears, or bullocks black, 115
Or that black devils make a fierce attack.

But—to proceed as quickly as I can—
Lo ! Cato, he that was so wise a man, 120
Said he not thus—‘ Take no account of dreams ’ ?
Now, sir ” —quoth she—“ when we fly from the beams,
Then, as ye love me, take some laxative !
On peril of my soul, and as I live,
I counsel you the best, I speak no guile, 125
That both from choler and melancholic bile
Ye straightway purge you ! Yea, and lest ye tarry,
Though near at hand is no apothecary,
I shall myself some herbs to you reveal,
That much will profit, and your sickness heal. 130
And in our yard such herbs I soon shall find
Possessing goodly virtues, of their kind,
To purge your humours and your health restore.
Now, for my love, forget this nevermore !
Ye be too choleric of complexión ; 135
’Ware lest the sun, in its ascensión,
May find you too replete with humours hot.
And if it do, I well dare lay a groat,
Ye soon will have a fever tertían,
Or else an ague, that may prove your bane. 140

A day or two repasts digestive make
Of worms, before your laxatives ye take
Of laurel, fumitory, centaury,
Or else of hellebore, that groweth nigh,
Or spurge, perchance, or of the cornel-berry, 145
Or ground-pine growing in our yard so merry!
Go, peck them as they grow, and eat them in;
Be merry, husband, for your father's kin,
And dread no dream! I cannot tell you more."

"Madam," quoth he, "gramercy for your lore! 150
But ne'ertheless, as touching Dan Catoun,
That hath of wisdom such a great renown,
Though that he bade us hold no dreams in dread,
We know how men in old books oft have read
Of many a man, more of authority 155
Than ever Cato was—so tell I thee—
That give the converse of his evidence,
And have discovered, by experience,
That dreams have their significations
As well of joy as tribulations 160
That folk experience in this present life;
Of this there needs no argument or strife.
The very proof appeareth clear indeed.
One of the greatest authors that men read

Saith thus: that whilom two good comrades went 165
 On pilgrimage, with wholly good intent.
 It happened so, they came into a town
 Where that they found such congregación
 Of people, yet so little room to spare,
 They could not find a single cottage there 170
 In which they both together lodged might be.
 Wherefore they must, of pure necessity,
 At least for that one night, part company,
 And each of them goes to his hostelry,
 And took his lodging, such as might befall. 175
 The one of them was lodged within a stall,
 Far in a yard, with oxen of the plough.
 The other man was lodged right well enow,
 As seemed his fortune or his chance to fall,
 Such fortune as alike doth govern all. 180
 And so befell that, long ere it was day,
 This latter dreamt, as in his bed he lay,
 How that his comrade gan upon him call,
 And said—‘ Alas ! for in an ox’s stall
 This night shall I be murdered, as I lie ; 185
 Now help me, comrade, help me ere I die,
 In all good haste,’ he cried, ‘ come help me here ! ’
 He started from his sleep for very fear ;
 But when from sleep he wakened was indeed,

He turned him o'er, and took thereof no heed ; 190
He thought his dream was but a vanity.
Thus twice the same dream in his sleep dreamt he.
And yet the third time came his friend again—
For so he dreamt—and cried—'I now am slain!
Behold my bleeding wounds, how deep and wide! 195
Arise up early in the morrow-tide,
And at the west-gate of the town,' quoth he,
'A cart all filled with dung there mayst thou see,
In which my body all privily is hid ;
To have that cart arrested, boldly bid. 200
My gold hath caused my murder, sooth to tell ;'
And told him how the murder all befell,
With a full piteous face, all pale of hue.
And, trust me well, he found his dream too true.
For on the morrow, as soon as it was day, 205
Unto his comrade's inn he took his way,
And when he came unto this ox's stall,
After his comrade he began to call.
The keeper of the lodging-house anon
Answered and said—'Your comrade, sir, is gone; 210
As soon as day he went out of the town.'
This man soon fell in great suspición,
Remembering all he dreamt as late he lay,
And forth he goes, no longer will he stay,

Unto the west-gate of the town, and there 215
 A dung-cart found, to dung land as it were,
 And all appointed in the self-same wise
 As ye have heard the dead man to devise.
 And with a hardy heart he gan to cry
 Vengeance and justice for this felony :— 220
 ‘Last night my comrade murdered was,’ he cries,
 ‘And prone within this cart he gaping lies.
 I cry out for the justices,’ quoth he,
 ‘That in this city crime’s avengers be.
 Alas! alas! here lies my comrade slain!’ 225
 Why should I lengthen out this tale in vain?
 The people came, and cast the cart to ground,
 And in the middle of the dung they found
 The dead man, that had murdered been all new.
 O gracious God! that art so just and true, 230
 Lo, how that Thou bewrayest crime alway!
Murder will out, this see we day by day.
 It is so hateful, so abominable
 To God, that is so just, so reasonable,
 That He permits not that it hidden be. 235
 Though it may wait a year, or two, or three,
 Murder will out—take this conclusion.
 And right anon, the watchmen of that town
 Have caught the carter, to the rack him drew,

And rack'd the keeper of the lodging too, 240
Till they confessed their wickedness at last,
And by the neck were hanged, full sure and fast.

Thus may men see that dreams are full of dread ;
And truly, in the self-same book I read,
Just in the second chapter after this, 245
I tell you true, so have I joy or bliss,
Two men would fain have passed, I understand,
O'er sea, on business, to some distant land,
If that the wind had not been so contráry,
That made them in a city for to tarry, 250
That stood full fair upon a haven-side.
But on a day, against the even-tide,
The wind gan change, and blew as suited best.
Joyful and glad they went unto their rest,
With full intent at early hour to sail. 255
But to the first a marvel great befell ;
For lo ! as sleeping in his bed he lay,
He dreamt a wondrous dream, at dawn of day ;
He thought a man stood near, his bed beside,
Commanding him that he should there abide, 260
And saying thus—' if thou to-morrow wend,
Thou wilt be drowned ; my tale is at an end.'
He woke, and to his friend the dream he told,

And prayed him from his journey to withhold ;
 For just one day he prayed him to abide. 265
 His friend, that lay upon the bed beside,
 Gan for to laugh, and mocked at him full fast.
 'No dream,' quoth he, 'shall make me so aghast
 That I will let it hinder my affairs.
 A straw for all thy dreamings ! Say, who cares ? 270
 For dreams are all but empty things and vain.
 Men dream of owls or else of apes amain,
 And eke of many a fancy therewithal ;
 Men dream of things that ne'er befell, nor shall.
 But since I see that thou wilt here abide, 275
 And thus wilt lose all wilfully the tide,
 God knows I pity you ; so now, good day !'
 And thus he took his leave, and went his way.
 But ere that he but half his course had sailed,
 I know not why, nor what the vessel ailed, 280
 But casually the vessel's bottom rent,
 And ship and men beneath the water went
 In sight of other vessels there beside,
 That with them sailed out at the self-same tide.
 And therefore, lady Part-e-lote so dear, 285
 By such examples old thou seest full clear
 That no man should too heedlessly dismiss
 His dreams of warning ; for I tell thee this,

That many a dream is such as one should dread.

Lo! in Saint Kenelm's legend thus I read, 290
(The son of Kenwulf, once the noble king
Of Mercia's land,) how Kenelm dreamt a thing;
Just ere that he was murdered, on a day,
His murder in a dream did he survey.
His nurse revealed to him, ere it befell, 295
The dream in full, and bade him keep him well
From treason; but he was but seven years old,
And therefore little heeded how she told
What meant his dream, so little feared he hurt.
Full willingly would I resign my shirt 300
If ye had read his Legend, as have I!
Dame Part-e-lote, I tell you certainly,
Macrobius, who wrote the *visión*
In Africk, of the worthy Scipiön,
Affirmeth dreams, declaring that they be 305
Warnings of future things that men may see.
And furthermore, I pray, consider well,
In the Old Testament, if Daniel
Imagined dreams to be but vanity.
Read eke of Joseph, where you well may see 310
If some men's dreams at times (I say not all)
Are warnings of the things that shall befall.

Keep Pharaoh, king of Egypt, well in view ;
Read of his baker and his butler too,
Were not their dreams significant indeed ? 315
He that accounts of sundry realms will read
Of dreams may gather many a wondrous thing.

Lo ! Cræsus, he that was of Lydia king,
Dreamt he not how he sat upon a tree,
Which signified how that he hanged should be ? 320
And lo ! Andromaché, great Hector's wife,
The day that Hector was to lose his life,
She dreamt, alas ! upon that fatal morn,
How that the life of Hector was forlorn
If in that evil hour the strife he sought. 325
She warned him well, but all, alas ! for naught.
For forth he strode, for all her pleadings vain,
And by Achilles' hand anon was slain.
That dismal tale is all too long to tell,
And eke the day is near, I may not dwell. 330
And shortly, this conclusion I may state,
That from this vision I prognosticate
Adversity ; and I say, furthermore,
That by your laxatives I set no store,
They are but poison, and their worth but small ; 335
I never liked them, and despise them all.

Now let us speak of mirth, and leave all this.
 For as, my Part-e-lote, I hope for bliss,
 In one thing fate has sent me bounteous grace.
 For when I view the beauty of your face, 340
 So bright a scarlet-red surrounds each eye,
 It causeth all my terror for to die.
 For, just as sure as *In principio*,
Mulier est hominis confusio ;
 My dear, the meaning of this Latin is— 345
 ‘ Woman is man’s delight and all his bliss.’
 For when beside me here you sit so coy,
 I feel so full of happiness and joy, 350
 I can defy each vision, sign, and dream ! ”
 And with that word he flew down from the beam,
 For day had come ; the hens down fluttered all,
 And with a ‘ chuck ’ began he them to call,
 For he had found some corn-grains in the yard. 355
 Royal he seemed ; no more he felt afeard,
 But like a lion grim he looks and goes,
 And up and down he roams, upon his toes, 360
 He scarce would deign to set his foot to ground.
 He chucketh whensoever a grain he found,
 And up to him his wives come running all.
 Thus royal, like a prince within his hall,
 Leave I this Chanticleer in happy state, 365

And now will I his casualty relate.
 When that the month in which the world began,
 The month of March, when God created man,
 Was now complete, and also did ensue,
 Since March began, full thirty days and two, 370
 It chanced that Chanticleer, in all his pride,
 His seven wives all walking by his side,
 Cast up his eyes to view the shining sun,
 That in the sign of Taurus now had run
 Twenty degrees and one, and somewhat more, 375
 And knew by nature, and no other lore,
 That it was prime, and crew with blissful cry.
 "The sun," quoth he, "has climbed aloft on high
 Forty degrees and one, and more, y-wis.
 My dearest Part-e-lote, my worldly bliss, 380
 Hark to the blissful birds, how loud they sing,
 And see the flowers, how freshly they upspring,
 With joy and revelry my heart doth swell."
 But suddenly disaster him befell;
 For ever the latter end of joy is wo. 385
 God knows that worldly joy can quickly go.
 And if a writer fairly could endite,
 So in a treatise might he safely write,
 As being a sovereign notability.
 Now, every wise man, let him hearken me. 390

This story is as true, I undertake,
As is the book of Lanc-e-lot de Lake,
That women in great reverence still hold.
Now I return to what remains untold.

A fox, renowned for sly iniquity, 395
That in the grove had dwelt for years full three,
Impelled by bold imagination's flight,
Had broken through the hedge that very night
Into the yard, where Chanticleer the fair
Was, with his seven wives, wont to repair ; 400
And in a bed of pot-herbs still he lay,
Till it was past the earlier hours of day,
Waiting his time on Chanticleer to fall,
As such fell homicides oft lurk and crawl,
That in await lie close, to murder men. 405
O thou false murd'rer, lurking in thy den !
O new Iscariot ! new Genilon !
O false dissembler, trait'rous Greek Sinón,
Who broughtest Troy all utterly to sorrow !
O Chanticleer, accurs-ed be the morrow 410
That thou into the yard flew from the beam !
Full clearly wast thou cautioned in thy dream
That this same morn was perilous to thee !
But that which God foreknows must surely be,

As certain clerks full learnedly remark. 415
 And learn of any well-instructed clerk,
 How great in schools is oft the altercation
 As touching this, how great the disputation,
 Debated by a hundred thousand men.
 How shall I e'er contrive to sift it then 420
 As can the holy doctor Augustine,
 Boethius, or the bishop Bradwardine,
 Whether that God's foreknowledge prescient
 By need constrains me to the fixed event—
 I mean by *need* a plain necessity— 425
 Or else, if a free choice be granted me
 To do that very thing, or do it not,
 Though God foreknows it ere that it be wrought;
 Or if His knowledge ne'er constrains at all
 Save by necessity conditional. 430
 I will not now discuss such matters here,
 My tale is of a cock, as ye may hear,
 That took his wife's advice, unto his sorrow,
 To venture in the yard upon the morrow,
 When he had dreamt the dream of which I told. 435
 Ah! women's counsels are too often cold!
 Ah! woman's counsel brought us first to woe,
 And Adam caused from Paradise to go,
 Where he had been full merry, and well at ease.

But, since I know not whom I might displease 440
 If women's counsel I should dare to blame,
 Pass on, for I but said it in my game.
 Read authors, such as make such matters clear,
 And what they say of women ye may hear.
 These are the cock's remarks, they are not mine, 445
 For harm in women can I none divine.
 Fair in the sand, to bask her merrily,
 Lies Part-e-lote, and all her sisters by,
 Full in the sun ; and Chanticleer so free
 Sang merrier than the mermaid in the sea ; 450
 For Physiologus, assuredly,
 Says how they sing there well and merrily.
 And so befell that, as he cast his eye,
 Among the pot-herbs, on a butterfly,
 He ware was of the fox that lay full low. 455
 No longer had he confidence to crow,
 But cried anon ' cok-cok ! ' and up did start,
 As one that is affrighted in his heart.
 For naturally a beast desires to flee
 From his contráry, if he may it see, 460
 Though ne'er before he saw him with his eye.

This Chanticleer, when he the fox did spy,
 He would have fled, but that the wily foe

Said, " Gentle sir, alas ! where would ye go ?
 Be ye afraid of me, that am your friend ? 465
 Now surely, worse were I than any fiend
 If e'er I wished you harm or villainy !
 I am not come your secret haunt to spy,
 But, truly now, the cause of my coming
 Was only for to hearken how ye sing. 470
 Forsooth, ye have a voice as merry and soft
 As any angel hath, that dwells aloft ;
 More skilled are ye in music's every tone
 Than was Boëce, or any songster known.
 My lord your father—God his soul now bless ! 475
 And eek your mother, in her gentleness,
 Have been within my house—to my great ease ;
 And truly, sir, full fain would I you please.
 But, when men speak of singing, let me say,
 As ever I hope my eyes will welcome day, 480
 Save you, I never heard a man so sing
 As did your father on a May-morning.
 In faith, right from the heart was all his song,
 And, for to make his singing sound more strong,
 He would so pain him, that with both his eyes 485
 He ever winked, so shrill and clear his cries ;
 And stood upon his tip-toes therewithal ;
 And stretched out all his neck so long and small.

And eek he was of such discretión
 That there was no man, in no región, 490
 That him in song or wisdom might surpass.
 I know the tale, in Dan Burnéll the Ass,
 Amongst his verses, how there was a cock
 Who, for a priest's son gave him once a knock
 Upon his leg, in heedlessness of youth, 495
 He made him lose his benefice forsooth.
 But surely, there is no comparison
 Between the wisdom and discretión
 Your father had, and that cock's subtlety.
 Now sing, my friend, for sweet saint Charity ! 500
 Let's see, can ye your father counterfeit ? "

This Chanticleer began his wings to beat,
 As one that could his treason not espy,
 So was he ravished with his flattery !

Alas ! my lords, what flatt'ers oft ye keep 505
 Within your courts, and many a traitor deep
 That pleases far more surely, by my faith,
 Then he who veriest truth unto you saith.
 Go, read Ecclesiast on flattery ;
 Beware, my lords, of all their treachery ! 510

This Chanticleer stood high upon his toes,

Stretching his neck, and held his eyes all close,
 And gan to crow out loudly, for the nonce ;
 The fox—sir Russell—started up at once,
 And by the throat he caught sir Chanticleer, 515
 And on his back towards the wood him bare,
 For no pursuit or outcry yet was made.
 O destiny, that no man may evade !
 Alas ! that Chanticleer flew from the beams !
 Alas ! his wife had no belief in dreams ! 520
 And on a Friday fell this sad event !
 O Venus, that art goddess of content,
 Since Chanticleer had vowed to thee his faith,
 Why wouldst thou suffer on thy day his death ? 526
 Oh Geoffrey Vinsauf, poet sovereign,
 Who, when King Richard, Lion-heart, was slain
 With shot, complainedst of his death so sore,
 Why have not I thine eloquence and lore, 530
 To chide against the Friday, as did ye ?
 For truly on a Friday slain was he.
 Then would I show you how I could complain
 Of Chanticleer's sad terror, and his pain.

Forsooth such cry, such lamentación 535
 Was ne'er by ladies made, since Ilión
 Was won, when Pyrrhus, with his sword blood-red,

Caught by the beard King Priam, nigh half-dead,
 And slew him (as the Æneid-story shows),
 As from the hens within the farmyard rose 540
 When Chanticleer thus vanished from their eyes.
 But Part-e-lote sent forth the shrillest cries,
 More loudly than did Hasdrubal's pale wife ;
 For when her husband dear had lost his life,
 And Romans had sad Carthage set on fire, 545
 She was so full of torment and of ire
 That in the flames she leapt, with wilful start,
 And burnt herself with all undaunted heart.
 O woful hens, so loud were your exclams
 As, when that Nero set the town in flames 550
 Of Rome, were raised by senators' sad wives,
 Because their husbands all had lost their lives,
 All innocent ; yet Nero hath them slain.
 Now will I turn unto my tale again.
 This poor old widow, and her daughters two 555
 Heard all the hens thus utter all their woe ;
 And out of doors they hurried fast anon,
 And saw the fox toward the grove was gone,
 And bare the cock upon his back away.
 Then loud they cried " alas ! and welladay ! 560
 Ha ! ha ! the fox ! "—and after him they ran,
 And eek with staves there followed many a man ;

Ran Coll our dog, and Talbot, and Garland,
And Malkin, with a distaff in her hand ;
Ran cow and calf, and eek the very hogs ; 565
So were they scared by barking of the dogs
And shouting of the men and women eke,
They ran until they feared their hearts would break.
They yelled aloud as yell the fiends at strife ;
The ducks cried out as if they felt the knife ; 570
The geese for very fear flew o'er the trees ;
Out of the hive there came the swarm of bees ;
So hideous was the clamour, *ben'dic'te !*
That Jack Straw with his men, in murderous glee,
Made never shoutings half so loud and shrill, 575
When seeking some poor Flemish man to kill,
As on that day was made against the fox.
Of brass they brought out trumpets, and of box,
Of horn, of bone, in which they puffed and blew,
And therewithal they whooped and made ado, 580
It seemed as if the heaven itself would fall.
And now, good men, I pray you hearken all !

Lo ! how that fortune changeth suddenly
The hope and boasting of the enemy !
This cock that lay upon the fox's back, 585
In all his dread, unto the fox he spake,

And said—"good sir, if that I were as ye,
 I yet would say—and so may heaven help me—
 'Turn back again, ye churls and peasants all ;
 A very pestilence upon you fall ! 590
 Now I am come unto this forest-side,
 Despite you all, the cock shall here abide !
 I'll eat him up, in faith, and that anon ! ' "
 The fox replied, " In faith, it shall be done ! "
 And as he spake that word, right suddenly 595
 The cock brake from his mouth full cleverly,
 And high upon a tree he flew anon.
 And when the fox perceived that he was gone,
 " Alas ! " quoth he, " alas ! good Chanticleer,
 I have to you done great offence, I fear, 600
 In so far as I made you so afeard,
 When I you caught, and carried from the yard.
 But sir, I did it to no ill intent ;
 Come down, and let me tell you what I meant ;
 I'll tell you all the truth, God help me so ! " 605
 " Nay then," quoth he, " a curse upon us two,
 And first I curse myself, both blood and bones,
 If thou beguile me oftener than once !
 Thou nevermore shalt, by thy flattery,
 Cause me to sing, while winking with mine eye. 610
 For he that winketh, when he ought to see,

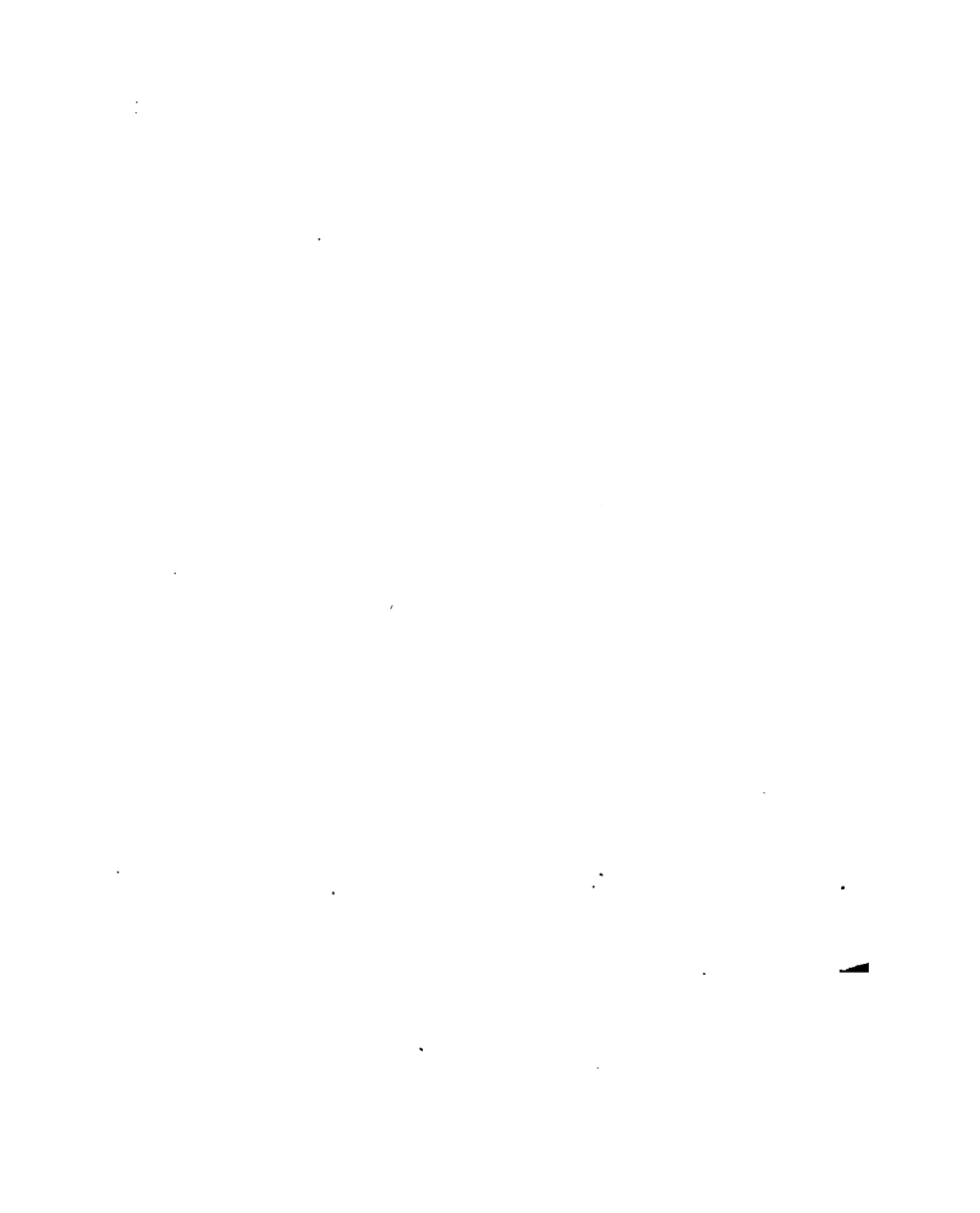
All wilfully, thrive nevermore may he ! ”
“ Nay, ” quoth the fox, “ God grant he thrive amiss
Who knows so little self-command as this,
To talk aloud when he should hold his peace ! ” 615

Lo ! such it is to be so cautionless,
So negligent, so fain of flattery !
But ye that think this tale a mere folly,
As of a fox, or of a cock and hen,
Take the morality thereof, good men ! 620
For saint Paul saith, that all that written is
For our instruction written is, y-wis.
Then take the corn, and let the chaff be still.

Now, gracious God, if that it be Thy will,
As saith our bishop, make us all good men, 625
And bring us to His heavenly bliss !—Amen.

Here is ended the Nun's Priest's Tale.

THE SQUIRE'S TALE



PART I

“Squire, come near, if such your wish in truth,
And somewhat say of love ; for you, forsooth,
Know of its ways as much as any man ! ”

“Nay, sir,” quoth he, “yet will I, as I can,
Speak heartily thereof, and not rebel 5
Against your will ; now hear the tale I tell.
Have me excused if e’er I speak amiss ;
My will is good ; and lo ! my tale is this.”

AT Sarai reigned, in Tartary’s far land,
A king who war on Russia took in hand, 10
Whereby there died full many a doughty man.
This noble king was known as Cámuscán,
Who, in his time was of so great renown
That nowhere was, in any región,

So excellent a lord in every thing ; 15
 He lacked in naught belonging to a king.
 As to the faith in which he had been born,
 He kept the customs whereto he had sworn ;
 Moreover, he was wealthy, wise, and bold,
 Compassionate and just, and self-controlled ; 20
 True to his word, with probity endued ;
 Firm as the world's fixed centre was his mood ;
 Young, fresh, and strong, in arms ambitious
 As any bachelor of all his house.
 Of person was he fair and fortunate, 25
 And alway kept so well his royal estate
 That nowhere known was such another man.

This noble king, this Tartar Cámbuscán,
 Begat two sons on Elpheta his wife,
 Of which the elder named was Algarsíf, 30
 The younger son was known as Cambalo.
 A daughter had this worthy king alsó
 That youngest was, whose name was Canacee.
 But to describe how beautiful was she
 Lies neither in my tongue, nor in my skill ; 35
 So high a task I cannot well fulfil.
 My English eek is insufficiént ;
 It needs an orator most excellent

Who knows the terms belonging to his art,
 To represent her grace in every part, 40
 None such am I, I speak but as I can.
 And so befell that, when this Cámbuscán
 Had borne his diadem for twenty years,
 As was his yearly custom, it appears,
 He bade the feast of his nativity 45
 Through all his city vast proclaimed to be,
 The fifteenth day of March, of all the year.
 Phœbus the sun right jolly was and clear ;
 For he was near his 'exaltación,'
 In Mars's 'face,' in Mars's 'mansión,' 50
 In Aries, that choleric hot sign.
 Full pleasant was the weather and benign,
 Wherefore the birds, to greet the sun's bright sheen,
 The joyful season, and the springing green,
 Full loudly sang of their affection. 55
 They joyed in getting them protection
 Against the sword of winter keen and cold.

This Cámbuscán, of whom I have you told,
 Sits on his daïs, clad right royally,
 And diadem'd, within his palace high, 60
 And holds his feast, so festive and so grand,
 Its like was never seen in any land.

Of which if I should tell you all th' array,
 Then would it occupy a summer's day ;
 And eke it needs not fully to relate 65
 The order, how each course was served in state.
 I need not tell you of their dishes strange,
 Their herons young, with roasted swans for change.
 Eke in that land, as say the knights of old,
 Some meats are known, that men as dainties hold, 70
 That in this land have reputation small ;
 Lives not the man that may report it all.
 I'll not delay ; the hour approaches 'prime' ;
 The only fruit thereof were loss of time ;
 Back to my first design I have recourse. 75

And so befell that, after the third course,
 While that this king thus sat in royal array,
 Hearing his minstrels all their music play
 Before him at the board, deliciously,
 In at the great hall-door, all suddenly, 80
 There came a knight upon a steed of brass,
 And in his hand a mirror broad of glass.
 Upon his thumb he bore of gold a ring,
 And by his side a naked sword hanging,
 And up he rideth to the kingly board. 85
 In all the hall was spoken never a word

For marvel of this knight ; him to behold
Full busily are gazing young and old.

This stranger knight, that came so suddenly,
All armed, except his head, full royally, 90
Saluteth king and queen and nobles all,
In order, as they sat within the hall,
With such high reverence and gentleness,
Which both his speech and countenance express,
That Gawain, with his olden courtesy, 95
Though back from Fairy-land returned were he,
Could not amend it by a single word.
And after this, before the kingly board,
With manly voice his message he express'd,
According to the form that served him best, 100
Without a fault in syllable or letter.
And, that his message should appear the better,
His gestures in accord were with his speech,
As rhetoric its learners well can teach.
And though I cannot imitate his style, 105
Nor know I how to climb so high a stile,
Yet thus I say, expressing his intent,
This is the general sense of all he meant,
If so be that I bear it well in mind.

He said—"The king of Araby and Ind, 110
 My gracious lord, upon this solemn day,
 Saluteth you as best he can and may,
 And sendeth you, in honour of your feast,
 By me, that ready am at your behest,
 This steed of brass, that easily, I say, 115
 Within the compass of a nat'ral day,
 That is to say, in four and twenty hours,
 Where'er you list, in drought or else in show'rs,
 Can bear your body into every place
 To which your heart desireth for to pace 120
 Without a hurt to you, through foul or fair ;
 Or, if you list to fly as high in air
 As doth an eagle, when him lists to soar,
 This self-same steed shall bear you evermore
 Without a harm, till ye attain your quest, 125
 Though that ye sleep upon his back, or rest ;
 And, when you twirl a pin, will home return.
 Its maker many a curious art did learn ;
 He watch'd full many a constellati6n
 Ere he had done his operati6n ; 130
 And knew full many a seal and magic old.

This mirror eek, that in my hand I hold,
 This virtue hath, that men may in it see

When there shall happen some adversity
 Unto your realm, or to yourself alsó ; 135
 And openly, who is your friend or foe.
 And more than this, if any lady bright
 Hath set her heart on any kind of wight,
 If he be false, his treason shall she see,
 His newer love and all his subtlety 140
 So openly, that nothing may them hide.
 Wherefore, to mark this pleasant summer-tide,
 This mirror and this ring, that here ye see,
 He sent hath to my lady Canacee,
 Your excellent fair daughter that is here. 145
 The virtue of the ring, if ye will hear,
 Is this ; that if it please her it to wear
 Upon her thumb, or in her purse to bear,
 There is no bird that flies beneath the sky
 But she at once shall understand his cry, 150
 And know his meaning openly and plain,
 And in his language answer him again.
 And every grass that grows upon a root
 She eke shall know, and whom it best may boot,
 Although his wounds be ne'er so deep and wide. 155

This naked sword, that hangeth by my side,
 Such virtue hath, that whomsoe'er ye smite,

Right through his armour will it carve and bite,
Were it as thick as is the knotted oak ;
And he that has been wounded with its stroke 160
Shall ne'er be whole until you list, of grace,
To stroke him with the flat side on the place
Where he was hurt at first ; this is to say,
The sword's flat blade all gently must you lay
Upon the wound, and it will close again ; 165
This is the very truth, I will not feign ;
It will not fail while it is in your hold."

And when this knight his message thus had told,
He rideth out of hall, and down doth 'light.
His steed, which as the sun itself shone bright, 170
Stands in the court, as still as any stone.
The knight is to his chamber led anon,
Is soon unarm'd, and brought the feast to share.
The royal presents are convey'd with care,
That is to say, the sword and mirror bright, 175
And to the castle's keep are borne aright
By officers appointed for this thing ;
And unto Canacee was borne the ring
With honour, as she sat there at the table.

But certainly, to speak without a fable, 180

The horse of brass, immoveably it stood,
As though unto the ground it had been glued.
No man can move it from its chosen site
By power of windlass or with pulley's might ;
Good reason why ; they do not know the way. 185
And therefore in the court they let it stay
Till that the knight, as ye shall after hear,
Hath taught them how to make it disappear.
Great was the press, that swarmeth to and fro,
To gaze upon this horse, that standeth so ; 190
The steed so high was, and so broad and long,
So well proportioned to be wholly strong,
As if it were a steed of Lombardy ;
Therewith as horse-like and as quick of eye
As it a true Apulian courser were. 195
For truly, from his tail unto his ear,
Nature nor art, for all that men could see,
Could not amend him in the least degree.
But evermore their greatest wonder was
How it could move or fly, yet be of brass ; 200
'Twas wrought by fairies, so to most it seemed.
Thus divers people, diversely they deemed ;
As many heads, so many wits one sees.
They murmured all, as doth a hive of bees,
Inventing reasons in their fantasy, 205

Rehearsing tales of olden poetry.
Some said, 'twas like the Pegasæan steed,
Apollo's horse, that flew with winged speed ;
Or else 'twas like the horse of Greek Sinón
That brought on Troy its dire destruction, 210
As men may in the olden stories read.
"My heart," quoth one, "is evermore in dread ;
I trow some men of arms lie hid within,
Conspiring how this city they may win ;
It were but right that we the truth should know." 215
Another to his fellow whispered low,
And said—"He erreth ! every one can tell
'Tis some illusion, wrought by magic spell,
As jugglers show us at these banquets great."
Of sundry judgements thus they talk and prate, 220
As common people argue commonly
Of things that are contrived more subtly
Than in their ign'rance they can comprehend.
They shape their judgements to the worsè end.

And some men wondered at the mirror's sheen, 225
That borne into the castle-keep had been,
How men might in it such strange visions see.
Another, answering, said it well might be
Quite nat'rally, by compositions

Of angles, and by sly reflexions ; 230
And said that once in Rome was such an one.
They speak of Alhazén and Vitulón,
And Aristotle, who treated, in their lives,
Of curious mirrors and of perspectives,
As they well know who have their books explored. 235

And other folk have wondered at the sword
That had the power to pierce through everything.
They fell to speak of Telephus the king,
And of Achilles with his spear of steel
Wherewith he could at pleasure harm or heal 240
In such a wise as with the sword one may,
Whereof such wonders you have heard me say.
They speak of means for hardening metals tried,
Of juice of herbs medicinal beside,
And how and when they thus should hardened be, 245
Means all unknown, at any rate, to me.

Then argue they of Canacee's gold ring ;
And all agreed, that such a wondrous thing
Of rings with magic virtue knew they none,
Save that wise Moses and king Solomon 250
Had once a name for skill in such an art.
Thus talk the people as they walk apart.
But ne'er the less, some argued how it was

Wondrous that fern-ashes could furnish glass,
Yet glass to fern-ash bears no likeness strong. 255
Yet, since it has been known on earth so long,
Therefore hath ceased men's talking and men's wonder.
As sorely wonder some at cause of thunder,
At ebb or flood, at gossamer or mist,
At everything, until the cause be wist. 260
Thus wrangle they and talk, and means devise,
Till from the board the king at last did rise.

Phœbus hath left the angle meridional,
And still ascending was the beast royál,
The gentle Lion, with his Aldirán, 265
When that this Tartar king, this Cámbuscán,
Rose from the table where he sat on high—
Before him goes the pealing minstrelsy—
To gain his room with tapestry hung round ;
And there the divers instruments resound 270
That it is like a heaven for to hear.
Now dance amain dame Venus' children dear ;
For in 'the Fishes' sat she now full high,
Regarding them below with friendly eye.

This noble king is set upon his throne ; 275
The stranger knight is brought before him soon,
And to the dance he goes with Canacee.

Here is the revel and the jollity
Such as a dull man cannot rightly tell.
He must know love and love's devotion well, 280
And be a festive man as fresh as May,
Ere he can well describe such brave array.
For who can tell you all the forms of dances,
Such strange and fresh, such curious countenances,
Such subtle glances and dissimuling 285
For dread of jealous men's discovering ?
No man but Lanc-e-lot ; and he is dead.
Therefore I leave this merriment unsaid,
And tell no more ; but in this jolliness
I leave them, till to supper fast they press. 290

The steward bids men bring the spices soon
And eke the wine, while sounds a merry tune.
And now the ushers and the squires are gone ;
The spices and the wine have come anon.
They eat and drink ; and when this had an end, 295
Their wonted way unto the temple wend.
The service done, they sup by light of day.
What need is to rehearse you their array ?
Each man knows well that, at a royal feast,
Is plenty, for the greatest and the least, 300
And dainties more than dwell within my ken.

The supper ended, goes this king of men
 To see this horse of brass, with all the rout
 Of lords and ladies following him about.
 Such wondering was there at this horse of brass 305
 That, ever since Troy's hour of peril was,
 When such a horse was wondered at by men,
 Was never such a wondering as was then.
 But finally the king doth ask this knight
 The virtue of this courser and the might, 310
 And prayed him to explain his governance.
 This horse anon began to trip and dance
 When that this knight laid hand upon his rein,
 And said—"Sir king, no more is to explain
 But, when you fain would ride him anywhere, 315
 You turn a pin that stands within his ear,
 As I shall show you how, between us two.
 You whisper to him to what place also
 Or to what country you are fain to ride ;
 And when you come to where you would abide, 320
 Bid him descend, and turn another pin—
 The gist of the contrivance lies therein—
 And down will he descend, and do your will ;
 And in that place will he continue still,
 Though all the world the contrary have sworn ; 325
 He never shall from thence be dragged or borne.

Or, if you wish to bid him thence depart,
 Then turn this pin, and straightway will he start
 Out of the sight of every kind of wight,
 And come again, be it by day or night, 330
 Whene'er it please you call him back again,
 In such a manner as I shall explain
 Between yourself and me, within the hour;
 Ride when you list, it lies within your power."
 And when the king informed was by the knight, 335
 And understood within his wit aright
 The manner and the form of all this thing,
 Right glad and blithe this noble doughty king
 Repaireth to his revel as before.
 Unto the castle men the bridle bore 340
 To keep it 'mongst his jewels choice and rare.
 The horse then vanished—none knew how or where—
 Out of their sight; you get no more of me.
 And thus I leave in joy and jollity
 This Cámbuscán and lords all revelling 345
 Until well nigh the day began to spring.

PART II

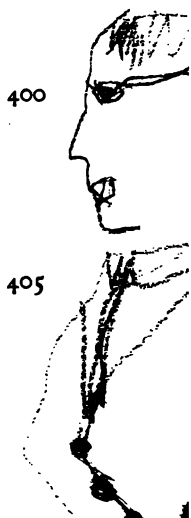
The nurse of good digestion—Sleep, indeed—
Now winked upon them, bidding them take heed
That so much drink and labour must have rest,
And with a gaping mouth them all he kiss'd, 350 .
And said—“ ’Tis now the hour to lay you down,
For blood is in his domination.
Take care of blood, kind Nature's friend,” quoth he.
They thank him gapingly, by two, by three,
And every wight withdrew to take his rest, 355 .
As Sleep them bade ; they took it for the best.
The dreams they dreamt shall not be told by me ;
Full were their heads of wine's fumosity,
That causes dreams whereby one sets no store.
They slept until the hour of prime was o'er, 360 .

That is, the most of them, save Canacee ;
 She was full moderate, as women be.
 For of her father had she taken leave
 To go to rest, soon after it was eve.
 To prove of pallid look no wish had she, 365
 Nor on the morrow spiritless to be ;
 She slept her first sound sleep, and then awoke,
 For such a joy within her heart she took
 Both of her golden ring and mirror quaint
 That twenty times her colour came and went. 370
 And in her sleep, beneath th' impressi6n
 Her mirror wrought, she had a visi6n ;
 And therefore, ere the sun gan up to glide,
 She called upon her nurse, that slept beside,
 And said, it was her pleasure now to rise. 375
 Such good old dames are fond of seeming wise,
 And thus the nurse her answer gave anon,
 "Dear Madam, whither would you now be gone
 Thus early ? For the folk are all at rest."
 "I will," quoth she, "arise ; I deem it best 380
 No longer for to sleep, but walk about."
 Her nurse awakes her women, a great rout,
 And up they rise, in number ten or twelve.
 Up riseth fairest Canacee herself,
 As bright and ruddy as the vernal sun 385

That in the Ram his four degrees had run ;
Nor higher was he, when she ready was.
And forth with easy footstep doth she pass,
As fits the pleasant spring, in light array,
Prepared to walk afoot or be at play, 390
With only five or six in company,
And down a vale, along the park, goes she.

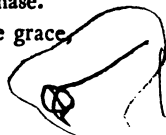
The vapour from the earth, that rose as steam,
Now made the sun all broad and red to seem ;
And ne'ertheless, it was so glad a sight 395
That all their hearts it made serene and light,
What with the season and the fair morning,
And with the birds she heard so sweetly sing ;
For all at once she knew well what they meant,
E'en by their song, and all their true intent. 400

The purpose, wherefore every tale is told,
If it be tarried till the joy be cold
Of them that hitherto have listened long,
The pleasure wanes, and ever grows less strong
For fulsomeness of its prolixity ; 405
And by that token seems it best to me
I now should to my story condescend,
And of their walking make right soon an end.



Amid a withered tree, as white as chalk,
 As Canacee was playing in her walk, 410
 There sat a falcon overhead full high,
 That with so piteous voice began to cry
 That with her cry the wood resounded all.
 So piteously she beat her body small
 With both her rapid wings, the trickling blood 415
 Ran redly down the tree whereon she stood.
 Unceasingly she cried aloud and shrieked,
 And with her beak her body so she pricked,
 That ne'er was tiger, nor such cruel beast,
 That dwelleth in a wood or in forést, 420
 But would have wept, if how to weep he knew,
 For pity, as her shrieks she doth renew.
 For never yet was born the living wight—
 If I a falcon can describe aright—
 That heard of such another for fairnéss, 425
 As well of plumage as of slenderness
 Of shape, and all that reckon'd well may be.
 A falcon peregrine, it seemed, was she,
 Of foreign land ; and ever, as she stood,
 She swooneth oftentimes for lack of blood, 430
 Till well nigh hath she fallen from the tree.
 This noble king's fair daughter, Canacee,
 That on her finger bore the magic ring

Whereby she understood well everything
That any bird might in his language say, 435
And in his language answers could convey,
Hath understood whate'er the falcon cried,
And well nigh could, for pity's sake, have died.
Now to the tree she goes full hastily,
And on this falcon looketh piteously, 440
And held her lap abroad, for well knew she
The falcon soon must fall from off the tree,
Whene'er it next should swoon, for lack of blood.
A long while thus, close watching her, she stood,
Till at the last she spake with gentle cheer, 445
Unto the hawk, such words as ye shall hear.
"What is the reason, if it be to tell,
That keeps you in this bitter pain of hell?"—
Quoth Canacee unto the hawk above—
"Is it for grief at death, or loss of love? 450
For, as I trow, these are the causes two
That most assail a gentle heart with woe ;
Of other harm it needeth not to speak.
For on yourself your injuries you wreak ;
Which proveth well, that either love or dread 455
Must be the reason for your cruel deed,
Since I can see no wight that gives you chase.
For love of God, now show yourself some grace,



Or tell me what may help ; for west nor east
 I never saw ere now a bird or beast 460
 That towards himself would act so piteously.
 You slay me with your sorrow, verily ;
 I have for you so great compassión.
 For God's dear love, come from the tree adown ;
 And as I am a king's own daughter true, 465
 If that I verily the reason knew
 Of your disease, if it lay in my might,
 I would amend it, ere that it were night,
 So truly help me God who made mankind !
 And healing herbs sufficient will I find 470
 To heal your bleeding wounds with hastily."

Then shrieked the falcon yet more piteously
 Than e'er before, and fell to ground anon,
 And lies in swoon as dead, and still as stone,
 Till Canacee doth in her lap her take, 475
 Until the time she should from swoon awake.
 And after she recovered from her swoon,
 In her hawk's language thus she answered soon :—
 " That pity runneth in a gentle heart,
 That feels its sympathy with sorrow's smart, 480
 Is proved all day, as men with ease may see
 As well by facts as by authority ;

For gentle heart discloseth gentleness.
I see well, that ye have of my distress
Compassion great, my fair good Canacee, 485
For very womanly benignity
Such as your natural sympathies declare.
And, not for hope the better thus to fare,
But in obedience to your pity free,
And to teach others to beware by me, 490
As by the whelp the lion may be taught,
E'en for that cause and with that very thought,
Whilst that I still have leisure time to spend,
My wrongs will I confess, before I end."
And ever, whilst the one her sorrows mourn'd, 495
The other wept, as if to water turn'd,
Till that the falcon prayed her to be still ;
And with a sigh, right thus she said her will :—

“Where I was bred—alas ! that fatal day !
And fostered in a rock of marble gray 500
So tenderly, that naught afflicted me,
I never knew what was adversity,
Till I could fly full high up in the sky.
A tercel falcon also dwelt hard by,
Who seemed the fount of all true nobleness ; 505
Tho' full was he of treason and falseness,

They were so wrapped up under humble guise,
 And under show of truth, in such a wise,
 Such outward kindness and attentive care,
 I could not guess how falsely he could fare, 510
 So deep in grain his outward hues he dyed !
 E'en as a serpent under flowers doth hide
 Until he sees a fitting time to bite,
 E'en so this god of love, this hypocrite
 Doth acts of courtship and submits him so, 515
 And outwardly doth such attentions show
 As well accord with nobleness in love.
 As in a tomb the fair part is above,
 And under is the corpse, such as ye wot,
 Such was this hypocrite, both cold and hot ; 520
 And in this wise he served his own intent
 That (save the fiend) none guessed at what he meant.
 Thus long time had he wept and sore complain'd,
 And many a year his service to me feign'd,
 Until my heart, in folly too extreme, 525
 All innocent of malice so supreme,
 And fearful for his death—it seem'd to me—
 Upon his oaths and his security,
 Granted him love, on this condition,
 That evermore my honour and renown 530
 Were safe—in private and in public view ;

That is, that as to his desert seem'd due,
 I gave him all my heart and all my thought—
 God wot and he, his share had else been naught—
 And took his heart in change for mine for aye. 535
 But sooth is said, ere this full many a day,
 'A true wight and a thief ne'er think the same.'
 And when he saw how far had gone the game,
 That I had fully granted him my love
 In such a wise as I have said above, 540
 And given him my own true heart, as free
 As he had sworn he gave his heart to me,
 Anon this tiger, full of doubleness,
 Fell on his knees with such pure humbleness,
 With such high reverence, or so it seem'd, 545
 So like a gentle lover, as I deem'd,
 So ravish'd, as he seem'd to be, for joy,
 That never Jason, nor Paris of Troy—
 What, Jason? nay, nor such another man
 Since Lamech was, that first of all began 550
 To love two wives, as writers old have said,
 Nor ever, since the first of men was made,
 Could any, by the twenty-thousandth part,
 Well counterfeit his sophistries of art;
 Nor worthy be his shoe-string to undo, 555
 Where doubleness or feigning come in view;

Nor thank another wight as he did me.
 His manner was a heaven for to see
 For any woman, were she ne'er so wise ;
 So painted he and comb'd, at point-device, 560
 As well his words as his demeanour kind.
 And I so loved him for his humble mind
 And for the truth I deem'd was in his heart,
 That, if for any cause he seem'd to smart,
 All were it little, if his harm I knew, 565
 Methought I felt death tear my heart in two.
 In brief, so far the matter forward went,
 That *my* will was but *his* will's instrument ;
 That is to say, my will his will obey'd
 In everything, as far as reason sway'd, 570
 Within the limits of my honour clear.
 Nor ever held I anything so dear
 As him, God wot ; nor ever so shall do.
 This lasteth longer than a year or two,
 That I imagined of him naught but good. 575
 But finally, thus at the last it stood,
 That fortune would, he needs must go away
 Out of the place wherein I still must stay.
 If this did grieve me, make no question,
 I cannot make of it description ; 580
 But one thing can I say, undoubtingly,

I know what is the pain of death thereby ;
 Such grief I felt because he might not stay.
 So took he leave of me upon a day
 With such feign'd sorrow that, all verily, 585
 I thought he felt as deep a grief as I,
 When that I heard him speak, and saw his hue.
 But ne'ertheless I thought he was so true,
 And eek he would return again, in truth,
 Within a little while, to say the sooth ; 590
 And reason eke demanded he should go
 For honour's sake, as oft it happeth so,
 Till I made virtue of necessity,
 And took it well, since that it needs must be.
 As best I might, I hid my mournful look ; 595
 And called Saint John to witness, as I took
 His hand, and said—" Lo ! I am yours alone !
 Be such as I to you have been—your own !"
 What words he answer'd, need I not rehearse ;
 For who can better speak, or who do worse ? 600
 When he hath all well *said*, then hath he done.
 ' Behoves a man to use a full long spoon
 That eateth with a fiend ! '—thus heard I say.
 So at the last he needs must take his way, 604
 And forth he flees, and went where pleas'd him best.
 And when his purpose was at last to rest,

I trow he kept a certain saw in mind,
That 'everything, repairing to its kind,
Finds happiness'; thus say men, as I guess;
Men love by nature all newfangledness, 610
As do the birds that men in cages feed.
For though thou night and day of such take heed,
And strew their cages fair and soft as silk,
And give them sugar, honey, bread and milk,
Yet right anon, if once his door is up, 615
He with his feet will spurn aside his cup,
And to the wood he goes, and worms doth eat;
For so newfangled are they of their meat,
And novelties they love, as in their kind;
No nobleness of love their faith can bind. 620
So fared this tercel-hawk, alas! the day!
Though he was nobly born, and fresh, and gay,
And goodly to behold, of humble cheer,
He saw upon a day a kite fly near,
And suddenly this kite he worshipped so, 625
That all his love to me did he forgo,
And in this wise hath falsified his truth.
Thus hath the kite my lover gained, forsooth,
And I am lost, beyond all remedy!"

And with that word the falcon gan to cry, 630

And swooned once more in Canacee's fair lap.
Great was the sorrow for the hawk's mishap
Of Canacee and all her maidens dear ;
They knew not how they might the falcon cheer.
But Canacee home bears her in her lap, 635
And softly doth in plasters her enwrap,
Where with her beak her tender breast she tare.
Now what doth Canacee but herbs most rare
Dig from the ground, and mingle ointments new
Of herbs of healing power and fine of hue, 640
To heal this hawk with ? And from day till night
She plies her busy task as best she might.
Beside her bed she made a falcon's mew,
And covered it above with velvets blue,
In sign of constancy in women seen. 645
And all without, the mew was coloured green,
Whereon were painted birds of faith untrue,
As wrens and tereels, owls of sombre hue ;
And pies, that at them love to scold and chide,
Right for despite, were painted them beside. 650

Thus leave I Canacee, her hawk to heal ;
No longer with her ring my tale shall deal,
Until its course requires me to explain
How that this falcon gat her love again,

Repentant, as the story telleth us, 655
By mediation of sir Cambalus,
The younger prince, of whom before I told.
And henceforth will I all my purpose hold
To speak of battles and adventures fair,
That never yet were marvels heard so rare. 660

First will I tell you of king Cámbuscán,
Than in his lifetime many a city wan ;
And after will I speak of Algarsíf,
How that he Theodora won to wife, 665
For whom full oft in peril great he was,
But well was holpen by the steed of brass ;
And after will I speak of Cambalo
That fought in tourney with the brethren two
For Canacee, before he might her win ;
And where I left I will again begin. 670

(Unfnished.)

NOTES

I. THE MAN OF LAWS' TALE.

Line 151. *The emperor.* Gower calls him Tiberius Constantine, who was emperor (not of Rome, but) of the East, A.D. 578, and was succeeded, as in this story, by Maurice, A.D. 582. His capital was Constantinople, whither merchants from Syria could easily repair; but the greater fame of Rome caused the substitution of the Western for the Eastern capital.

190. This refers to the old belief in astrology, in which the influence of the planets played so prominent a part. Parts of this stanza and the next are imitated from the *Megacosmos* of Bernardus Silvestris, a Latin poet of the twelfth century.

198. The names of Achilles and the rest are all familiar. For the death of Turnus, see the end of Virgil's *Æneid*.

263. *All and some*, i. e. one and all; once a common phrase.

276. *And you.* The change from *thy* in l. 274 to *you* in this line is intentional. The use of *you*, as compared with *thou*, denoted (in Chaucer's time) a higher degree of respect or reverence.

288. *Pyrrhus*, son of Achilles, one of the heroes concealed in the wooden horse, which was brought into Troy through a breach in the walls ; see Virgil, *Æn.* ii. ; Hamlet, ii. 2. 474.

289. *Thebes*. Referring to the famous siege of Thebes by Polynices and six other heroes.

295. The old astronomy, that of Ptolemy, imagined nine spheres revolving round the central stationary earth ; of the seven innermost, each carried with it one of the seven planets, viz. the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn ; the eighth sphere, that of the fixed stars, had a slow motion from west to east round the axis of the zodiac to account for the precession of the equinoxes ; whilst the ninth or outermost sphere, called the *primum mobile*, or *sphere of first motion*, had a diurnal revolution from east to west, carrying everything with it. This outermost sphere is here called "the first all-moving firmament," which whirls everything with it in its irresistible westward movement ; a movement contrary to that of the "natural" motion, viz. that in which the sun advances through the signs of the zodiac. This movement had brought the planets into such a position that Mars was dominant, and, being an unlucky planet, had "slain" the proposed marriage.

302. A planet was said to ascend (rise above the horizon) directly or tortuously, according as it was in a 'direct' or a 'tortuous' zodiacal sign. The tortuous signs are those from Capricornus to Gemini, the most tortuous being those of Pisces and Aries. The allusion is probably to the sign of Aries, of which Mars was said to be the 'lord.'

304. *Angle*. The words 'angle' and 'house' are here used technically, as in astrology. Of the twelve equal parts, called houses, into which the celestial sphere was divided, four were called 'angles,' four others 'succeedents,' and the rest 'cadents.' Mars, it seems, was not in an 'angle' or lucky house, but in his 'darkest house,' i. e. in Scorpio. For Mars had two houses,

one in Aries, and one in Scorpio; and Scorpio, being most unlucky, was called 'the house of death.'

305. *Of evil influence.* The original here has *O Atawir*. *Atawir* is an astrological term of Arabic origin, of which 'evil influence' is, practically, the equivalent.

306. *Moon.* The influence of the Moon might have been good, but it was in a bad or 'feeble' position.

307. The Moon was moving towards 'conjunction' or proximity to a place where it was not wanted; whilst it had been 'brought' or taken away from the place in which it would have 'been well.'

312. *Election.* A technical term for a favourable moment for commencing any action, and especially for commencing a voyage. It is equivalent to 'fit moment.'

313. *High condition*; i. e. high rank. People of rank could more easily command lucky predictions than others, because they could more easily pay a satisfactory price to the astrologer.

314. *Moment.* The exact position of the heavens at the 'nativity,' or moment of birth, was supposed to be most important; and astrologers made their predictions accordingly.

332. *Alkoran*, i. e. the Koran, or Koraan; since *al* is here the Arabic definite article. Chaucer's scribes spell it *Alkaron* (for *Al Korawn*); and it here rhymes with the sound of mod. E. *awn*, which represents the pronunciation, in Chaucer's time, of the word which we now spell *one*, and pronounce as *wun*.

359. *Semiramis*, the famous (mythical) empress of Nineveh, who, according to one account, put her husband to death.

360. There was an old belief that the serpent who tempted Eve was 'under femininity,' i. e. it had a head like that of a beautiful woman; as may be seen in the chapter-house of Salisbury cathedral, and elsewhere.

401. The allusion is to Lucan's *Pharsalia* ; but it is remarkable that Lucan's description of Caesar's character is unfavourable, and no particular 'triumph' of his is there recorded.

421-7. This stanza is an interpolation from an earlier work by Chaucer ; see the Preface, p. xii. It is translated from pope Innocent, who here quotes from Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*, book ii., prose 4 ; from Prov. xiv. 13 (see l. 424) ; and from Ecclesiasticus xi. 8 (see ll. 426, 427).

451, 457. See Hymns Ancient and Modern, no. 97, part 2.

"Faithful Cross, above all other
One and only noble Tree . . .
Thou alone wast counted worthy
This world's ransom to sustain . . .
With the sacred blood anointed
Of the Lamb for sinners slain."

Translated from a Latin hymn by Venantius Fortunatus.

461. I. e. the Cross protects every man and woman o'er whom its protecting arms extend.

464. The Grecian sea ; i. e. the Levant, here extended to mean the whole Mediterranean Sea, up to the Strait of Morocco or Gibraltar.

491. "And he cried with a loud voice to the four Angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying 'Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees ;'" Rev. vii. 2, 3.

500. Alluding to the legend of St. Mary the Egyptian ; whose day is April 9.

508. *Northumberland* ; the district, not the county. South Yorkshire is meant, as the French version mentions the river Humber.

578. *Alla*, i. e. *Ælla*, king of Northumberland, A.D. 560-7.

631. She had no champion to take her part, if she claimed the right of appealing to the ordeal by single combat.

634. When Christ descended into hell, he bound Satan with chains ; according to the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus.

639. See the Story of Susannah in the Apocrypha.

641. According to the apocryphal gospel of James, the Virgin Mary's mother's name was Anna. Her day is July 26.

669. *The neck-nape bone.* The F. version has *en le haterel*, i. e. on the nape of the neck ; this shows what is meant by Chaucer's 'nekke-boon.'

676. The readings are : *holde I my pees, I holde my pees, or I mot holde my pees* ; which is nonsense. The right reading is *I held my pees* ; for, indeed, the original has *tacui*.

689. A most exquisite touch. Only a Custance could have been sorry for such a wretch.

730. Donegild, according to Trivet, was then residing at Knaresborough.

754. *A fiend* ; Chaucer says *An elf* ; the original says "malueise esprit," an evil spirit.

771-7. This is the second interpolated stanza ; see the Preface, p. xii.

782. Chaucer has *mannish* ; and in the next line, *feendly*.

804. The word *sleeping* refers to *thy spirit* in l. 803. It is an awkward construction ; but I leave it as it is.

878. *Is.* So in Chaucer ; we should now use *are*. It arose from the use of the formula *where is*, at the beginning of an interrogative sentence.

939. See the story in the Book of Judith.

947. Cf. l. 464. Here Custance passes through the Strait of Gibraltar for the second time.

981. *Her aunt.* Rather, according to the original, her first cousin. The senator was Arsemius; and his wife, Helen, was the daughter of Sallustius, brother of the emperor Tiberius, who was Constance's father.

1121. *Maurice*; emperor from A.D. 582 to 602. "Maurice ascended the throne at the mature age of 43; and he reigned above 20 years over the east and over himself;" Gibbon, Roman Empire, ch. 45.

1134. "From the morning until the evening the time is changed;" Ecclesiasticus, xviii. 26.

1135-41. An interpolated stanza; see the Preface, p. xii.

1158. *Till death.* According to Gibbon, Tiberius the emperor died Aug. 14, 582. Constance is said to have died Nov. 23, 583 or 584.

II. THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE.

8. *Husbandry*, thrift, economical management. "There's husbandry in heaven; Their candles are all out;" Macbeth, ii. i. 4.

9. *Found herself*; the usual country phrase. "To find oneself, to provide one's own food and clothing;" Eng. Dial. Dict., ii. 359.

11. Burns tells us that his only pet ewe was named *Mailie*.

37. Fifteen|degrees of the equinoctial line correspond to one hour in time ; since 24 times 15 make the 360 degrees of the whole circumference.

54. *In hold*, in possession. So also in Greene's *George a Greene*, ed. Dyce, p. 256—"He hath my heart in hold." See the song below.

59. The original has—"My lief is faren in londe." This is the first line of a little song which is preserved in MS. Trin. Coll. Camb. R 319, fol. 154 :—

"My lefe ys faren in lond,
Allas ! why ys she so ?
And I am so sore bound,
I may nat com her to !
She hath my hert in hold
Where euer she ryde or go,
With trew loue a thousand fold !"

The MS. really has *ys faren in a lond*. But it is clear that we ought to omit *a* in this line ; it will then scan and make sense. *To fare in land* is to journey into the country. See the New Eng. Dict., s. v. *Land*, § 5.

79. *A beast*, i. e. a fox ; with whom Chanticleer was shortly to make a much closer acquaintance.

104. *Fumes* are explained by Burton to mean "all vapours arising out of the stomach," especially such as are due to gluttony and drunkenness. See his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. 1845, p. 438.

Complexions. This alludes to the four complexions, the sanguine, choleric, melancholic, and phlegmatic, which are so frequently alluded to in old medical treatises. They were caused by the four *humours*, viz. blood, choler, melancholy, and phlegm respectively ; see ll. 105, 108, 113.

120. *Cato*; not of Utica, but Dionysius Cato, the obscure author of a work named *Disticha de Moribus*. One of his sayings, here quoted, is—"Somnia ne cures;" *Dist. I. ii. 32*. See l. 151.

164. *Greatest*. The allusion is to Cicero, *De Divinatione*, i. 27. He is also responsible for the story alluded to in l. 244, and told at length in ll. 247-284.

290. Cenhelm succeeded his father Cenwulf of Mercia about A.D. 819, according to the story, at the age of seven years, but was soon murdered by order of his aunt Cwenthryth; see Florence of Worcester. His day is Dec. 13; and his story duly appears in Caxton's Golden Legend, where his dream is thus given. "Hym semed that he saw a tree stonde by hys beddes syde, and that the heyght therof touched heuen, and it shyned as bright as gold and had fayr braunches ful of blosmes and fruyte. And on euery braunche of thys tree were tapers of waxe brennyng and laumpes lyght, whiche was a glorious sight to beholde. And hym thought that he clymed vpon this tree, and Askeberde his gournour [i. e. tutor] stode bynethe and hewe doun this tree that he stode on. And whan thys tree was fallen doun, thys holy yong kyng was heuy and sorouful, and hym thought ther cam a fayr byrd whiche flewgh vp to heuen wyth grete joye." The "fayr byrd" meant St. Cenhelm's soul. The description of the tree seems to anticipate the "Christmas tree" of modern times.

303. It was Cicero who wrote "The Dream of Scipio;" but Macrobius made it his own in the middle ages, by his annotations and commentary.

318. The dream of Cræsus is given by Vincent of Beauvais in his *Speculum Historiale*, iii. 17. He dreamt that he was suffused with water by Jupiter, and wiped dry by Phœbus. His daughter expounded it to mean that he would be hanged; and his body would then be wetted by rain and afterwards dried by the sun.

321. We shall not find Andromache's dream in Homer ; but it is given in chapter xxiv. of Dares Phrygius, the chief authority for the history of the Trojan war in the middle ages.

343. *In principio*, in the beginning ; the opening words of St. John's Gospel, frequently quoted by the friars and other preachers.

344. A proverbial saying. In ch. cxxi. of the Dialogue of Creatures Moralysed, it appears thus :—"A woman, as saith the philosofre, is the confusyon of man." Chanticleer's translation is unblushingly false.

368. The old belief was that the world was created on the 18th of March ; see Ælfric's Homilies, ed. Thorpe, i. 100.

370. The date intended is May 3. This is playfully expressed by saying that, since March began, the month of March had been completed, and thirty-two days more.

377. *Prime*. The meaning of this Protean word varies ; it at first meant six A.M., but had come to mean nine A.M., as here. For as the sun was just past the 21st degree of Taurus, and the day was May 3, whilst the altitude of the sun was 41 degrees (l. 379), we can tell by calculation that the hour was nine A.M. Even a common celestial globe will show the same result.

385. "The end of that mirth is heaviness ;" Prov. xiv. 13.

392. *Lancelot* ; see the Morte Arthure.

407. *Genilon* ; the traitor who caused the defeat of Charlemagne, and the death of Roland. Also called Ganelon.

408. *Sinon* ; who beguiled the Trojans into allowing the entry of the wooden horse ; Æneid, ii. 259.

422. Thomas Bradwardine was proctor, and afterwards chancellor of the university of Oxford, in the early part of the fourteenth century.

436. An Old Norse proverb ; *cold* means 'baneful.'

451. *Physiologus* ; the name of a book on animals by one Theobaldus. The chapter on 'sirens' describes their singing.

474. Boethius wrote a treatise on music.

492. Nigellus Wireker, in the reign of Richard I., wrote a book entitled Brunellus, which was a nickname for an ass, since *Brunellus* or *Burnell* means 'little brown animal.' The story is, that a certain young Gundulfus threw a stone at a cock and broke his leg. And when Gundulfus was to have been ordained and to receive a benefice, the cock took his revenge by failing to crow ; so that he came too late, and lost his benefice.

509. *Ecclesiast*. Ecclesiasticus is meant ; see ch. xii. verses 10, 11, 16.

514. *Russell*, i. e. fox ; from his reddish-brown colour.

526. Friday is *dies Veneris* ; French *Vendredi*.

527. Geoffrey de Vinsauf wrote a Latin poem, containing a lamentable elegy on Richard I., who was wounded on *Friday*, March 26, and died on Tuesday, April 6, 1199.

543. *Hasdrubal* ; king of Carthage in B.C. 146, when it was taken and burnt by the Romans. See Orosius, iv. 13. 3.

574. Jack Straw, in 1381, killed many Flemings "cum clamore consueto ;" see Walsingham.

625. A note in the Ellesmere MS. attributes this saying to the Archbishop of Canterbury ; probably William Courtenay (1381-1396).

III. THE SQUIRE'S TALE.

1. This is said by the host of Southwark, whose business it was to call upon the various pilgrims to contribute a tale.

9. *Sarai* ; now Tsarev, near Sarepta, in Russia, on the river Volga.

12. *Cambuscan* ; also *Camius Kan*, a variant of Gengis Khan (lit. great khan or king), who died in 1227. But the king referred to in the Squire's Tale was really his grandson, Kublai Khan, who was also a Great Khan. See Col. Yule's edition of Marco Polo ; and the Preface, p. xix.

22. It was then thought that the earth's centre was the immovable centre of the universe.

49. Chaucer goes by the chronology of his own age. On the fifteenth of March, the sun was in the fourth degree of Aries (see l. 386) ; he was approaching his *exaltation*, which (according to astrology) was in the 19th degree of that sign ; he was also in Mars's *face*, since the *face* meant the *first ten* degrees of Aries, which was dedicated to Mars ; and he was in Mars's *mansion*, since the whole of Aries was a mansion of Mars.

73. *Prime* ; of various meaning, but in the preceding Tale, l. 377, it means 9 A.M. ; see the Note on that line, p. 119.

95. *Gawain* ; the most courteous knight of King Arthur's round table.

209. *Sinon* ; who introduced the wooden horse into Troy.

232. *Alhazen* ; an Arabian astronomer and optician ; he died about A.D. 1038. *Vitolon* ; i.e. Vitello or Vitellia, a Pallian mathematician ; he flourished about 1254.

238. *Telephus* ; a king of Mysia, who was wounded by Achilles. But as an oracle declared that his aid was necessary to the Greeks, he was healed by means of rust taken from the very spear which Achilles had used against him.

263. The heavens were divided into twelve equal parts, called *mansions* ; and four of these were called *angles*. The *angle meridional* was bounded by the meridian on its western edge ; so that the sun left that angle at noon ; and l. 263 merely means that it was past noon. At noon (in Chaucer's time. and in London) of March 15, the sign Leo (as here said) was just beginning to ascend above the eastern horizon ; but before the king rose from the table, even the star Aldiran had arisen, by which time it was nearly two o'clock in the afternoon.

265. *Aldiran* ; lit. 'two fore-paws,' viz. of Leo ; an inconspicuous star, apparently θ Hydræ, or near it. Its approximate position is given in two old star-lists.

273. When Venus was in the sign of Pisces or the Fishes, she was said to be in her exaltation ; and her astrological power was at the greatest.

352. Some physicians considered blood to be in its domination, or chief power, for six hours after midnight.

386. It was now the 16th of April, with the sun passing into the fifth degree of Aries.

387. Moreover, the sun was only four degrees above the horizon ; so that it was only about a quarter past six.

491. Herbert has the proverb—Beat the dog before the lion. I. e. beat a dog in the presence of a lion ; or, "beat a mean person in the presence of, and to the terror of, a great one ;" as Cotgrave says (s. v. *Batre*). Shakespeare explains it very clearly ; see *Othello*, ii. 3. 272.

550. *Lamech* ; the first to have two wives ; Gen. iv. 23.

602. So in *The Tempest*, ii. 2. 103 ; and *Comedy of Errors*, iv. 3. 64.

608. From *Boethius, De Consolatione Philosophiæ*, lib. iii. met. 2. Lines 611-617 are from the same source.

645. Blue was the colour of constancy ; but green (as in l. 646) of inconstancy and lightness. The 'green-eyed monster' means jealousy, which sees all people in a green light, and attributes to them inconstancy accordingly. But Jealousy itself was supposed to wear yellow ; as in l. 1071 of the *Knight's Tale*.

11-11-11

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